

The explainer video explained

By [Nicole Capper & Warren Coetzer](#)

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Trends come and go. But with my more than ten years in PR I am sure of one trend that is here to stay - and that is video. We have all been watching video climb the popularity charts, as South Africans access cheaper data via wi-fi at home, mobile data bundles become accessible, broadband promises are slowly fulfilled and the millennial generation turn their backs on their TV sets.



Nicole Capper

It is no surprise then to read that two-thirds of South Africans use video-on-demand, according to Nielsen research in April this year.

“The Video-on-Demand Survey polled more than 30,000 online respondents in 61 countries late last year and found that 63% of South Africans watch some kind of video-on-demand programming on an online device and 79% do so at least once a week”. (Bekezela Phakathi, Business Day, 25 April 2016.)

The statistic that stood out was the following: “Rather than replacing paid-for traditional TV services, growing online-service subscriptions are instead supplementing established viewing habits, highlighting South Africans’ growing appetite for entertainment”.

Bingo! We’re in a landscape where consumers are multi-channel users. This prodded us into a proactive drive to find, and partner with, production companies that understand that brands need to be provided with an opportunity for trial with video - given a quality product at the best possible rate in order to see the ROI, engagement and power of the visual storytelling medium within the communications mix.

And it’s possible – [we’ve done it](#). Here are some of the lessons learnt from our partnership with Firestarter’s Warren Coetzer:

The brief is critical

We’ve co-developed a brief that drills down into the key relevant factors which assist in the time consuming (and critical) tasks of writing the script, sourcing the relevant music and images and building in the technicalities of transcoding, exporting and uploading.

We learnt to do this the hard way – the style has to work with the motion graphic designer’s skill and that technical time is essential for managing timeline expectations. After all, we’re producing excellent product at minimum cost – so it takes a bit of time!

Keeping costs down

The music

The costs to produce a video are often hidden to the uninitiated. For example, there is royalty free stock music available for a small licence fee – but wait until you’ve made your way through 50 tracks of elevator music and tried to imagine how it can be cut, split, edited and played with – that cost saving doesn’t seem quite as appealing and the limitations become immediately obvious.

A good producer does this for you – but best to build in a small US \$ budget to ensure that



you don't land up producing an unbudgeted-for track that could be One Direction's next best sell. In Warren's early career, before he understood the complexities of music licencing, he used a portion of the famous Barry White track to warm up the audience as the host made his entrance to stage. Not understanding the difference between Royalty Free and Free to Use came at a very high price tag and thousands of unbudgeted Rands per episode. Needless to say he was not very popular with the bean counters.

Warren Coetzer

The visuals

Stock video clips are the next cornerstone. You can buy them from a provider such as Adobe stock for as much as \$79 – but know that you will probably get around 10-15 seconds of usable footage. So aim for graphics and text – with free-to-use, high-res video and images from various sites online. It's essential when doing so, that you understand Creative Commons licencing laws. Just because someone left it lying around on the internet, doesn't mean you can just download and use it at will.

We found that free-to-use music, video and images are available, and more and more sources are popping up every day, but their predominant source of origin is the Northern Hemisphere. Images of Africa and Africans were, for want of more polite descriptions, postcard rural. You may also find yourself spending unexpected days of your life sifting through the relatively un-curated archives.

So be aware of what you have on file and ask the client to dig deep into their archives for source footage. Do they have the source footage of that Corporate Video? Do they have B-roll from that event? Send us all the stills of your CSI, brand campaigns, the latest lunch celebration.....the more, the better.

A fisherman on a False Bay beach recently filmed an Orca snatching a seal right from the shore break metres from where he was standing. A rare, opportunistic shot that months of pre-production and barrow loads of money could never guarantee you. Perhaps worth checking with your team for those "money shots" on their own personal devices.

The template

A template can sometimes be just the ticket for a quick turnaround promo, but they are not a guaranteed Magic Bullet and can paint you into a corner. Use sparingly.

As Phakathi writes, "The advertisers with the greatest brand and sales impact will naturally be those that connect messages about products and services with the people who want them."

This, we suppose, has always been the art of good brand communication. The difference is now we have so many more exciting and highly effective ways to connect those messages and tell those brand stories. So let's tell stories.

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