

MZ 101:

Video production: Video checklist / Best Practices

Visual

- Garbage bins – garbage in general.
- Graffiti – slogans (art – use discretion)
- Smoking – in any form.
- Drinking alcohol – any identifiable alcohol including cups in hand – that one easily identifies content.
- Car Plates.
- Political Parties – logos – insignias.
- Old Unic Logos – or low quality.
- Construction.
- Ensure the background is clean and visually appealing
Avoid complex *messy* backgrounds (especially in focus so out of focus blurred questionable backgrounds are preferred)
- Unauthorized people or subjects.
- Unflattering acts – people subjects. Ex. tongues out / gestures / “extreme funny faces – inappropriate to subject matter.
- Unflattering clothing or accessories – or offensive markings.
- Framing that is too close – head / face – or using a wide lens so as to give the impression of distortion – or ‘frame fill.

Branding (Signs)

- Brands / logos of any kind.
- Signs / billboards.
- T-shirts with $\frac{3}{4}$ fill of logo.
- Water bottles – drinks of any kind that is identifiable.
- Any related advertising that has a blatant message.

Audio

- Quality of audio – technical setup workflow – use case for each situation.
- Audio backup where possible.
- Jewellery or accessories – ex. large earrings or necklace that interferes with recording.
- Wind that can be detectable.
- People talking nearby.
- High level of traffic.
- Construction.
- Plane noise.

General Direction

- Record enough B-roll – all types of shots including environment/ surroundings. These shots should be your best and most creative attempts.
- Create / use proper lighting. This includes bounce for exteriors.
- Camera settings and equipment double checks!
- Standards in proper framing and composition – ensure the scene looks aesthetically pleasing.
- Experiment with angles – no single angle is the answer to all!
- Avoid any shaky shots.
- Level Out Your Shots. Avoid badly tilted shots.
- Shots need lead and end time – a few steady seconds at the head and tail.
- Shots have a beginning / middle and ending.
- Use props when available to create interest/foreground/background.

People Direction

- Direct people to achieve creative shots – shoot for quality not quantity.
- NO backs of people, including back of heads – single or groups.
- Subjects energy & tone – calmness. Applies to speech and physicality.
- Control the eye line- where are they supposed to be looking. (Especially true for interviews)
- Subjects appearance - tidy - hair etc. Ask politely to address issues.
- Rehearse the answer – or speech – control for undesirable content. Do not just shoot multiple takes without a change in circumstances.
- Subjects speaks clearly - re-do takes to correct.

Other

- Plan ahead –
 - What are you looking to achieve with your video?
 - What should they do after watching it?
- Work out a concept or a script. Even a basic outline will help!
- Be super familiar with the tools you use on a daily basis. Do not ruin a shoot based on a simple technicality.
- If you have the time - Location Scouting is an important step – especially at a live event – where the event will unfold and not wait for you to become familiar with your surroundings.
- Natural light used as often as possible, taking into account audio pitfalls – see above.
- Test shots and logging is important – as part of the process. It may not always be possible – but plan on it – so you know that only ‘event limitations will prevent you from following through.

IS THIS ME?

- Strive for Excellence:** Surpass the average; aim to be exceptional. Embrace your role as a media professional and take pride in it. Stand out by being exceptional in your field. Wear your professional identity with honor and pride.
- Master Your Craft:** Dedicate yourself to comprehensive learning and practice to achieve mastery in your craft, not just superficial knowledge. Become a recognized expert and you will always be in demand.
- Exceed Expectations:** Always strive to surpass the basic requirements. Even after long hours, push yourself to maintain high standards and deliver superior results.
- Maintain a Strong Work Ethic:** Work diligently and enjoy your downtime, but keep these aspects of your life clearly distinct. Being able to ‘switch it on – no matter what is going on is a sign of professionalism.
- Exude Quiet Confidence:** Have a firm belief in your abilities without arrogance. Show your reliability and preparedness to handle any situation that comes your way.
- Prioritize Punctuality:** Make it a habit to be early for all engagements. Remember, being “on-time” means you’re already behind schedule. (Really think about that one!)
- Maintain a Positive Attitude:** Choose to be cheerful and optimistic, even when you’re not feeling your best. Your mood can significantly impact the team’s morale.
- Be Understanding and Patient:** Show empathy towards those who are less experienced with camera work. Offer reassurance and support to help them perform their best.
- Listen Actively:** Stay alert and attuned to conversations and cues that could inform and improve your work, whether it’s simple and ‘boring or complex and exciting.
- Create Instant Connections:** Develop the skill to quickly build rapport with new colleagues and subjects. Use humor and shared interests to break the ice.
- Adapt to Change:** Embrace flexibility as a core professional trait. Be ready to adjust to new plans and challenges without frustration.
- Communicate Proactively:** Be responsive and initiate communication when necessary. Opt for direct conversations over emails for efficiency and clarity. This is incredibly true for clients and those involved in live events.
- Assume Responsibility:** Ensure you have all necessary information for your work. Take charge of your duties, especially when it comes to being informed about schedules and production details. Proactive problem-solving is key to professionalism. Even if you think you need the tiniest piece of information, just do what’s necessary to get it!

***By focusing on these areas, you’ll not only enhance your professional reputation but also contribute positively to the projects you’re involved in. Keep calm, carry on, and remember that your efforts are instrumental in the success of the production, the team and all of UNIC!**