Video

Video cameras can be very important in law offices for shooting a day in the life video, preparation of witnesses for depositions, accident scenes, etc. Should you use digital or analog? The analog recorders are small, inexpensive and produce a respectable picture. However, playback and editing are trickier. If you wish to edit your analog tape on your computer, you will need to install a capture card and software. It is a tedious process. On the other hand, digital camcorders are easy. Shoot your footage, connect it to your PC, and edit your video. You get superior picture quality and the prices are below $1000.

Video was once reserved for the well-heeled law firms, but is now available because of the decrease in prices and the blossoming of digital video. Today's laptops with fast processors and large hard drives make it easy to play video clips directly off the hard drive through a presentation program. Digital video offers several advantages over playing analog tape video. Because you can easily control shot video in a computer, it is easier to create short effective clips with a mixture of other media in a presentation. Instead of the laborious analog process of creating a video, the shooting can be done with a digital camera and then directly imported into a camera for editing.

A multimedia presentation can add power and memorable moments to your settlement or other presentations. We live in a visual society. Decades of television, VCR's, and movies have shaped our attention spans, the way we are entertained and taught, and how businesses communicate with an audience. It is no wonder that visual aids have proliferated in presentations and aid the audience in understanding. The following steps can be used for creating quality video for use in your practice and can be done in a way that presents an acceptable level of quality for your case. The following steps can also be used as a discussion format with someone you may hire for such a project.

1. *Choose an engaging style for the video.* The video presentation is not meant to tell an entire story, but for the delivery of information and imagery that will communicate powerful emotions. It provides the visual proof. It takes them to the scene. Remember that a particular scene should not last for generally more than a minute or two and it should also make only one major point. A fast paced video presentation will keep your audiences attention just like we are programmed with TV. What will move your audience? Security, health, lost opportunities, and so forth.

2. *Write a script*. The purpose of writing a script is to describe the video being displayed, as well as what the camera should display to the audience. If you will be speaking, speak generally in a conversational tone instead of a formal manner. At the same time, direct what the camera should be shooting of your client, etc. You may shoot the same scene several

times from several different angles and then explain that later in an audio format.

3.   *Composing The Sho*t. After writing the script, you may want to prepare a storyboard that contains a sketch and description of each shot. This will define what the scene looks like and also the camera angle and composition of other parties or things in the scene. For example, if you take a picture of your client in a wheelchair from above, he or she will appear less significant then if your took a camera shot level or below them. Also, try to have other people in the scene so it doesn't look completely staged. Use close-ups, but not to close.

4.   *Choosing Your Equipment.* Your camcorder generally will have a major impact upon how it captures a particular scene and the lightening. VHS camcorders deliver passable results. Try to obtain a higher quality camcorder for the shoot.

5.   *Lighting the Scene*. If you are shooting indoors, video lights are a must. Generally, there are three types of lighting. Backlighting - means placing a light above and in back of the subject. Key light - is generally placed in front of the subject. However, the closer the light is to the subject, the fatter his or her features will appear. Finally, a fill light is used to software the effects of the key light.

6.   *Running a Sound Check.* You will generally want a better sound system then what is on your camcorder. Invest in a directional microphone or a lavaliere that can be hidden on the subject.

7.   *Directing the Action*. If it takes you a long time to set up the lighting and sound for a scene, you are probably on the right track. Be sure and run through a scene and then play it back to see how it looks. It is much better to get good footage only once then bring all the participants back. Don't get carried away with zooming in and out with your subject. Many times, you can edit a close-up shot into the footage and overlay the audio. Communicate with everyone what you are trying to accomplish with your shot.

8.   *Capture your video.* It is strongly suggested that you capture the video in a digital format. Today, the many styles and shapes of digital video cameras at a reasonable price make this an inexpensive proposition.

9.   *Edit your video*. Now you can edit the audio and video that you have captured using a number of video editing software, such as Adobe Premiere (www.adobe.com). You can add narrations, titles, music, straight cuts, transitions, video filters for poor film quality, special effects, slow motion or fast motion, etc. The script will guide you as you do the editing for the purpose you desire.

10.   *Compression.* The level and type of compression will depend upon your delivery vehicle, such as what type of computer and speed the CPU is. It also, after compression, can be transferred to an analog tape for playback through a VCR.