

# THE 5-STEP GUIDE TO VIDEO OUTSOURCING

Everything You Need to Know to  
Find Your Perfect Video Partner



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## Your clients are demanding video. They've read the statistics, are following the trends and are seeing the potential for using video to drive engagement.

But for many agency and marketing professionals, video production is not something you're involved with every day. You watch plenty of videos, but haven't yet been involved with creating a professional video. Now you've been assigned to manage a video project that will successfully achieve your clients' objectives, stays within budget and isn't too time consuming for you.

So how do you know which video production company to choose?

**Follow the steps in this guide and you will be able to:**

- Prepare what you need to know before beginning your search.
- Know what to ask potential video partners during your selection process?
- Assess production company estimates.
- Confidently choose the best video partner for your video project.

**There are five key steps in selecting a video partner:**

- 1) Define your video's purpose.
- 2) Research potential video production partners.
- 3) Narrow your list and begin the selection process.
- 4) Review estimates and references.
- 5) Use the assessment tool to select your video partner.

By following the basic steps in this guide, you'll be ready to confidently launch your next video project with your chosen video partner.

**80% of web users recall watching a video on a website they visited in the past 30 days; and of that 80%, 46% took some action after viewing the online video.**

-- Online Publishers Association

# Step 1: Define Your Video's Purpose

The first step is to get a good idea of the purpose and objectives of your video project. Every business video needs a purpose, a reason for its existence. Your video might need to give viewers a quick overview of a company, orient new employees, or wow key stakeholders at a meeting.

The purpose also informs how the video will be used and drives many of the subsequent content decisions, like the tone, treatment and type of video. Defining the purpose of your video also helps determine the type of video production partner you need. For example, you may need a company that does animation as well as interviews and b-roll or a company that has experience with creating spots for a national audience.

Your team may have developed a creative brief that has many of these details. If so, your video's purpose has probably already been defined.

If not, don't worry, here are three questions to help get you started:

- 1) Who is your target audience?
- 2) What problem are you trying to solve?
- 3) What action do you want your audience to take?

While it's ideal to have your video's purpose clearly defined before looking for a video producer, don't worry if you don't have it completely defined. Your selected video production partner can help clarify the purpose by making recommendations and suggestions based on their experience.

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defining your video content strategy?**

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# Step 2: Search for Potential Video Partners

## Figure Out the Type of Video Company You Need

Not all video companies are created equal. Some specialize in certain industries or production techniques, like animation. Matching your needs with the appropriate type of production company will help you narrow down your choices.

Here are some of the main ones:

### Video Production Companies

Video production companies come in all shapes and sizes. A great place to find out what they specialize in is to visit their website. Notice the type of video services they offer, learn more about the team and each team member's qualifications, and watch some samples. You'll find that some specialize in certain aspects of the video production process, while others provide everything under one roof.

### Meeting/Event Production Companies

These companies typically produce meetings and events, but might not necessarily specialize in creating videos. If your project is meeting or event based, this type of company might fit your needs.

### Solo Home-Based Producers

Independent producers typically utilize a network of freelancers for the technical production and manage the project as the producer/director. Check out their website and/or LinkedIn profile to get more information on their level of experience.

### Independent Filmmakers

Independent filmmakers are looking to create great works-of-art film. They are great at music videos and videos that use cinematic techniques if that is what you're looking for.

### Freelance Videographers

Freelance videographers main emphasis is typically on shooting footage. However, some videographers also have experience in editing as well.

## Start Searching

Once you've determined the type of production company that best fits your project, start searching for potential partners.

An easy place to begin your search is by starting with the video resources your company has used in the past. While this is a great starting point, they may not be the best fit for your particular project. You might find out that this video partner is great at shooting, but your project needs animation.

If your internal resource doesn't seem like a good fit for this project (or you don't have one), here are some other options to get you started:

- Ask for referrals from colleagues.
- Search the web for local video production companies that fit the type of company you need for this project.
- Find your city's online production guides that list all of the major video production companies in your area. One online resource is Production Hub: (<http://www.productionhub.com/>)

Cast a wide net at this point. You can narrow it down during Step 3.

## What to Look for During Your Search

Now's a great time to start getting an overall feel for companies you think might be a good fit for you and your project. Online resources are great tools to use during this phase and can give you an overall impression of each potential partner. While you're learning more about each company, create a list of potential video partners that interest you. Jotting down some notes on your initial impression of each company will help when it comes time to narrowing your list.

Don't worry about doing too much research during this phase. This exercise is all about narrowing down your search to ultimately generate a list of three possible partners that you'll research more in depth during the next step.

While learning more about each company, here are some questions to ask yourself and things keep in mind:

- How much experience do they have in the industry and how important is that to you?
- How transparent are they about the type of video work they do and level of experience?
- Does their website clearly define their video services, specialties and include samples?



- Do they have social media sites, video channels and a LinkedIn profile? If so, take a few minutes to browse through those channels.
- Do they have an online video portfolio of samples? If so:
  - Do they provide samples of recently produced videos?
  - What types of video projects do they work on and do these projects seem similar to yours?
  - Does it look like they have experience working with companies like yours?
- Are there any online reviews or customer testimonials you can read to get a sense of their clients overall satisfaction?
- Does this company's branding and personality seem like a potentially good fit for your company?

At this point, you're trying to get an overall impression of each company in order to whittle your list down to three potential partners that you can research more thoroughly during the next step.



# Step 3: Start the Conversation

Once you're satisfied you've searched far and wide for the right partner, it's time to narrow it down. Review your list, read through your notes and make your selections — no more than three options is ideal.

Creating a video is a highly-collaborative process, and you want to make sure you're working with a production company you feel comfortable with and can trust. Their responsiveness, professionalism and attention to detail during this stage of the process will really help you decide which company works best for this project.

## Start the Conversation

Pick up the phone or send them an email. Either way works well for introducing yourself.

If you decide to send an email, you really only need to provide each company with your name and phone number. Including your company name and adding a brief description of your project isn't crucial, but it does help the production company get a better understanding of who you are and what you're looking for before having a direct conversation.

## Give Them a Call

Being able to talk with someone from each production company about your project is important for several reasons: You want to make sure they have a good understanding of your project, you can gauge their level of genuine enthusiasm, and you'll come away with a first impression/gut instinct about each company. It also gives you a feel for their communication style.

**“Creating a video is a highly-collaborative process, and you want to make sure you're working with a production company you feel comfortable with and can trust.”**

# Ask Questions

Here's a list of questions to ask each company, and questions they may ask you during the phone call.

Questions to Ask Each Company	Questions to Expect Each Company to Ask You
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What makes you different from other video production companies?</li><li>• What's your process?</li><li>• Have you done videos similar to the one we're looking to produce? If so, can you send me relevant samples?</li><li>• Can you meet our deadline?</li></ul> <p>If you like what you hear during the phone conversation, go with your instincts and ask them to send you an estimate. Otherwise, wait until you've had an opportunity to review their relevant samples to see if you're still interested.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What your goal for this video?</li><li>• Who's your audience?</li><li>• How will the video be used? (tradeshow, website, meeting/event, social media, commercial etc.)</li><li>• What's your deadline?</li><li>• Do you have a budget in mind?</li><li>• Is there a video shoot involved?</li><li>• What is the general style of your video (interviews, animation, voiceover, actors, etc.)?</li><li>• What is the estimated run time of the video?</li><li>• Do you have any video samples you like?</li></ul> <p>These questions will ultimately help the production company give you a detailed estimate.</p>



## Reflect on the Conversation

Take a few minutes after each call to reflect on your first impressions of the conversation and the company.

- How easy were they to reach?
- How quickly did they respond to your initial reach out? (How quick were they to return phone calls and answer emails?)
- Did they seem genuinely excited about your project?
- Did they ask good questions?
- Was your interaction with the company positive?
- Are you comfortable with their level of experience?
- Have they produced similar types of videos?

## Tips for Reviewing Video Samples

We highly recommend asking your chosen production companies to send you video samples similar to the budget and project you're looking to produce.

There are many production decisions and elements that go into creating video. If just one element isn't good, it can bring down the production quality of the entire video. For example, the videography could be great, but if the sound quality is poor, it will bring down the quality of the entire production.

When reviewing video samples from each company, take the time to look for:

### Good Storytelling:

Does it grab and keep your attention? Is it engaging?

### Videography:

Are the shots well composed, in focus and well lit?

### Graphics:

Are the graphics well done, tasteful and appropriate for the piece?

### Sound:

Is the sound quality good, easy to understand and the music mix appropriate?

### Relevant:

Were the samples similar and relevant to the piece you are asking them to bid on? While industry experience is good, it shouldn't be your critical deciding factor.

**Samples are going to be the best reflection of the quality you can expect from a video production company.**

# Step 4: Review Estimates

You're almost there. You've reached out to your potential partners, asked some great questions and reviewed their video samples. The companies you've chosen should be able to provide you a detailed estimate within a few days along with the samples. While you're reviewing the estimates, look for:

## Comprehension:

Did the producer understand your project goals? Did they listen closely and convey the details correctly in the estimate?

## Treatment:

Did the producer provide a detailed explanation of how they would approach the creative treatment of your content and project?

## Plan and Schedule:

Did the producer clearly map out the production plan and create a schedule if you asked for it?

## Price:

Is the price close to the amount you were thinking? Was there enough detail provided to explain where all of the resources would be allocated? Did any of the costs seem questionable?



# Step 5: Assess Each Company and Make Your Decision

Now that you've had the chance to talk with a few companies and review their estimates, it's time to assess each company. Use this assessment tool to help you choose the production company that best fits your company's video project needs.

Grade each production company on a scale of 1 through 5, with 1 being not at all and 5 being the highest score possible:

**Company 1:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>OVERALL COMPATIBILITY</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
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Company wants my business and has experience in the type of video I'm looking to produce.

<b>ESTIMATE</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
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Company understands my needs, developed an appropriate estimate with treatment and the price falls within my budget.

<b>SAMPLES</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
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Were the samples engaging?  
Were the videos well shot, framed and focused?  
Were the graphics high quality?  
Was the sound quality and mix appropriate?  
Were the samples relevant?

## OTHER

1 2 3 4 5

Quality of company's references and gut instinct on the ability of the company.

TOTAL SCORE: \_\_\_\_\_

## Company 2: \_\_\_\_\_

### OVERALL COMPATIBILITY

1 2 3 4 5

Producer is experienced, wants my business and has experience in the type of video I'm looking to produce.

### ESTIMATE

1 2 3 4 5

Producer understands my needs, developed an appropriate treatment and the price falls within my budget.

### SAMPLES

1 2 3 4 5

Were the samples engaging?  
Was the video well shot, framed and focused?  
Were the graphics high quality?  
Was the sound quality and mix appropriate?  
Were the samples relevant?

## OTHER

1 2 3 4 5

Quality of producer's references and gut instinct on the ability of the producer.

TOTAL SCORE: \_\_\_\_\_

## Company 3: \_\_\_\_\_

### OVERALL COMPATIBILITY

1 2 3 4 5

Producer is experienced, wants my business and has experience in the type of video I'm looking to produce.

### ESTIMATE

1 2 3 4 5

Producer understands my needs, developed an appropriate treatment and the price falls within my budget.

### SAMPLES

1 2 3 4 5

Were the samples engaging?  
Was the video well shot, framed and focused?  
Were the graphics high quality?  
Was the sound quality and mix appropriate?  
Were the samples relevant?

### OTHER

1 2 3 4 5

Quality of producer's references and gut instinct on the ability of the producer.

**TOTAL SCORE:** \_\_\_\_\_



## Need a Tie Breaker? Ask for References

Maybe you've completed the assessment but are still having a hard time making that final decision? Contact your three finalists and ask them for client references if you didn't on your initial contact.

Here are some great questions to their references:

- Did the company work within your budget?
- Did they deliver the product on time?
- Were they able to advise you on best practices?
- Did they give you fresh ideas while also understanding your company's needs and limitations?
- How quick were they to return phone calls and answer emails?
- Was the process positive, collaborative and enjoyable?
- Do you feel you received the value you paid for?

We know this may seem like a lot of work upfront. But doing your due diligence in the beginning and knowing as much as possible before you commit to a long-term partnership can save you from having to go through the process again.

You don't need to be an expert in video production to create a great video. You just need to hire the right company to help you. We hope that by using this guide, you will find the best video production partner for your business.



# Ready to get to work?

Contact [Todd@mastcom.com](mailto:Todd@mastcom.com) to chat about your next video project. We're happy to walk you through each and every detail.

[CONTACT US](#)



# Interested in learning more?

Here are some other great resources we've put together that will help you along your video journey.



## Check Our Video Blog

Our best tips to lead your business to video success.

START WATCHING

## Ready to Get Started?

Our Script and Storyboard Worksheet will help guide you.

GET TO WORK