

## Video production walkthrough *(May 2021)*

### A guide for internal MnDOT clients and external consultants

Internal project teams and external video production teams can use the following *creative brief walkthrough* to help them develop a creative brief prior to creating video content for the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

### Project background and objectives



#### Questions to ask yourself

- Why are we producing this video?
- Is the video part of a larger campaign or initiative?
- What is the purpose?
- What specific outcome are we hoping to achieve?
- What's the expected shelf-life for this video?
- Do we intend for this video to be "evergreen" and can we produce it in a way where updates can be made easily and cost-effectively?

**Note:** *Be as specific as possible and avoid broad statements "to educate," "to inform," or "to increase awareness." Focus instead on changes in behavior that can be measured; what will happen because of the "increased awareness" or "education?" For example, you should not be creating a pedestrian safety video "to educate" people on the appropriate way to cross the street. You should be creating the video to change behaviors so more pedestrians can safely cross the street.*

### Target audience



#### Questions to ask yourself

- Who is our primary audience?
- What are their motivations, goals, values, beliefs and attitudes?

**Note:** *It is best to focus on one primary audience per video; however, it is OK to have a secondary audience in some cases. If there are several audiences to reach, that may be a good indication that you need more than one video.*

## Key message(s)

Your key message(s) should be stated from the perspective of those you're trying to influence. Try to put yourself in their shoes and answer the question "what's in it for me?" A clear description of these benefits will help the audience understand your message and take action.

**Remember:** you are likely not your own target audience – so a message that resonates with you personally may not be the best approach for your intended audience(s).



### Questions to ask yourself

- What is the core message we are trying to get across in the video?  
Are there any secondary messages or goals?
- What do we want the viewer to take away or remember after they watch this?
- What specific action do we want a viewer to take or do differently?

Additional question to ask if you have more than one key message:

- Will the length of the video allow us to effectively communicate these messages?

*Note: If you have multiple messages – or perhaps different timelines or geographic areas – you may want to produce more than one video. Short, concise and memorable videos generally have the most impact – and trying to squeeze too many messages into one video may have a negative effect and leave the viewer overwhelmed or confused.*

## Video distribution (How and where)

Videos should be contextual and platform-specific, whenever possible. If we are going to spend the money, time and resources to produce a video, it should be accompanied by a full, multi-platform plan for distribution.



### Questions to ask yourself

- Which platform(s) will work best for our video (e.g., YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, etc.)?  
Where is our target audience most likely to see the video?
- How will this video be shared – on a website? Via email? Social media?
- Will we ask partners to help amplify or share the video?

*Note: Scripting several slight variations of the same video for each intended platform can be a very cost-effective way to maximize the results of your video. Remember: people's attention spans are shorter than ever. Customizing video to platform will help you keep your viewer interested, and consulting with Communications and Engagement staff early can help with determining optimal video details.*

## Tone of voice



### Questions to ask yourself

- Is the content of the video light-hearted or serious?
- Should the tone be friendly or professional?

**Note: MnDOT Communications and Engagement staff must be part of the decision to choose the appropriate tone and talent for the video.**

## Format



### Questions to ask yourself

- What type of video will this be (e.g., educational, testimonial, training, explanatory)?
- What format makes the most sense (e.g., animation, graphics, interviews with key staff)?
- What supporting materials might we need (e.g., images, b-roll, etc)?
- Will this be produced in-house by MnDOT or with a consultant?

## Mandatory elements



### Questions to ask yourself

- Is there anything that **NEEDS TO BE INCLUDED** in the video (e.g., any non-negotiables such as MnDOT logo and brand-related colors, tagline, signature sound, closed captioning and ADA compliance)?
- Is there anything that **SHOULD NOT BE INCLUDED** in the video (e.g., consultant logos, non-brand-related colors or outdated logos, MnDOT jargon or terms that might not be understood by your audience(s))?

**Note: As video producer, you may be asked by MnDOT Communications and Engagement staff to create multiple video concepts for review. These “creative” concepts should reflect the project’s identified goals, objectives, target audience(s), key messages, distribution, tone of voice, format, mandatory elements, timeline and budget.**

# Timeline



## Questions to ask yourself

- How soon would we like to get started?
- Is there a specific deadline?
- How many rounds of revisions and approvals will be necessary?

**Note:** *It is important to create a realistic timeline that covers the following:*

### **Pre-production**

- Creative brief
- Storyboard
- Drafting script
- Client review period
- Final script
- Talent/voiceover acquisition

### **Production**

- Video shoot/renderings/creating visuals
- Graphic design/animations
- Editing

### **Post-production**

- First cut/rough cut
- Second cut (if necessary)
- Final cut/product delivery

# Budget

At this point, you likely already know how much money you have to work with. However, you may want to run through it one more time to account for any new revelations unveiled during the planning process that might affect the budget. The creative team will need to be aware of any financial constraints in determining an approach for the project.

## Approval process

Finally, you'll want to create a realistic timeline needed to complete the video project.



### Questions to ask yourself

- Who needs to review, and when (where in each stage of the project)?
- Do any of the reviewers have scheduling conflicts (e.g., vacation, planned leave, etc)?
- Have you accommodated time for the video to be posted and added to a project page or other “home” on the web?

**Note:** *The more people involved in the approval, the longer it will take. Those working with an external consultant should consider nominating one central point of contact who represents the agency.*