

28.09.06 (smz) – ARE YOU CAMERA-READY?

“Imagine there is an emergency in a chemical plant, the TV crowd comes and films all the smoke and chaos, - when you as a manager get in front of the camera distracted and unnerved, you have already lost,” says Uli Schmidt, owner and general Manager of GO-Film in Munich/Germany who has extensive experience in working in front and behind the camera himself. Schmidt explains that even in this awkward situation any manager has the right to stop the filming and to position himself against the right background, set his tie straight and concentrate.

Some people – mainly CEOs – have no choice but to appear in front of TV and video cameras. It is part of their job. As online video and video-conferencing becomes more popular, the probability of a sudden confrontation with a camera is increasing. Here are some tips that we have collected from our work, but also from the professionals we cooperate with:

Setup: A naked, bright-white studio is best for the camera, but the hardest of situations for you. If you feel uncomfortable, it becomes visible. On the other hand, your favorite relaxer at the fireplace is worst for the camera and makes you look terrible. My personal preference is a terrace with plants and trees, where you stand upright and talk to someone. Most hotels offer a hidden corner with two armchairs and possibilities to increase the light. Here you can sit and talk during the filming, and this will look quite natural. In all cases a quiet environment is important, sometimes hard to find, even a waiter who brings fresh water can be disturbing.

Clothes and makeup: The obvious ‘no stripes, no squares, nothing red’ is still valid. I have been told that my pink dress on our company video is too light, for example. Single colored suits and dresses are best, and woman shouldn’t wear jewellery since it interferes with the small microphone attached to your collar. You should think about where the attachable microphone can be fixed so that it becomes (almost) invisible. Also the connecting cable and cigarette-box shaped sender must be hidden under your dress or jacket. For men it is so much easier, however, women have more choice of color and I would encourage them to use this to their advantage.

The make-up question is a tricky one. If you are heavily done, you won’t like yourself in the film. If you wear no make-up at all, you won’t like yourself, either. To find the compromise that works for you, involves going through some trial and error for a while. The same is valid for your hair. If a professional hair and make-up specialist is on the set, use him or her, but pay close attention and stop them from creating someone in the mirror they like but has nothing to do with you. For men like for women the minimum is to use lots of powder and transparent lip gloss, displaying a good but simple haircut.

Body language: Your body language is 55% of the message. It is the single most important factor to watch during the filming. Ask someone you trust to watch your body language all the time and remind you to sit or stand straight. If you can, try not to be stiff (it sounds easy, but is really hard to do). If you feel uncomfortable in you shoes or clothes, it will become visible. Plant your feet firmly on the ground, smile .- and breathe. Drink lots of water, regardless of the make-up specialist’s complaints. Move towards the interviewer and be careful when crossing your legs. Check the picture if your body turns towards the

interviewer – and don't look into the camera for approval. The only exception is if you use direct speech towards the audience as an element of your message. Some moderators have their hands tied to the table, since they speak with their hands. This is terrible, and we believe that the future of video, notably online video is much more relaxed than in the past.

Voice: As you certainly know, there is a huge difference between your voice as you hear it yourself and when you listen to the recording. Although your voice may be too high or too shy, it is useless trying to change this throughout the filming. It is extremely hard to control a change of tone through the full filming process. What you should do, however, is control your pronunciation. Your audience is most grateful for articulated speech. When you practice at home in front of a mirror, work on your pronunciation, it pays off immediately. 38% of your message will be transported by the tone of your voice. It may be helpful to imagine a trustworthy person you tell your story to in front of you.

Message: The actual message is no more than 7% of what you bring across. So why do most of us use 100% of their time to prepare the message? The most important characteristic of any message is its shortness and the simplicity of language used. If you cannot memorize your text, use white postcards and write the first full sentence of a section on it, later, keywords are enough. I forget every single sentence in front of a camera and I guess it is more natural for me to use cards openly and not hiding them. I would also suggest that you hold your favorite pen or notebook, if this makes you more comfortable, although traditional filming professionals hate it.

High-definition video: The advent of high-definition video and TV should change the traditional viewing experience to a high degree. Not only are pictures much sharper, but

you see every detail that you do not see normally. Every wrinkle, spot, blotch. My personal view on this is, that the new technology and the widespread use of amateur video will change the traditional rules of behavior in front of a camera. It will be impossible to upgrade to the level of perfection for the rest of us, so let us be our natural selves!

Uli Schmidt, who used to train managers at AOL and Siemens how to behave when confronted with the camera eye and microphone, adds one very important advice: “If you are unwilling, it shows. You must really want to be in front of the camera. Make the decision and go. ”

Three very different examples demonstrate the variety of CEO videos:

A Klaus Kleinfeld, Siemens CEO:

http://www.siemens.com/index.jsp?sdc_p=ft4mls7uo1042401i1030112pcz3&sdc_bcpath=1327903.s_7,1328954.s_7,1030112.s_7&sdc_sid=24959389470&

B Guy Kawasaki, Founder and CEO of Garage.com:

<http://news.com.com/1606-2-5368404.html>

C Steve Ballmer, Microsoft CEO:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JA6h3f_bfYU&search=Ballmer

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That much about our new BMW 3 Series Coupe. Let me now come to our BMW X3 model update: Since its launch in January 2004, this vehicle has made a considerable contribution to the success of the BMW Group.
And we are positive that this BMW X3 model update is going to continue the success story: Again, we have raised product substance and introduced technical improvements. You could say that we have incorporated all new options into this vehicle that have become available to us since its initial market launch.

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