

BE A VIDEO STAR

> More than six billion videos are watched on YouTube every month, and according to Nielsen, the site reaches more U.S. adults in the 18- to 34-year-old demographic than any cable network. Of those folks watching, 40 percent are doing so on their mobile phones.

These statistics point to a fantastic opportunity for you as a business owner to share your story with customers using this red-hot media. So what's the hold up? Money? Time? Tech know-how? With video capturing so many eyes, it's time to move it from your wish list to your to-do list. This month, we explore how florists can capture professional-quality video using just a smartphone, a few inexpensive apps and a small dose of shot-taking know-how to deliver the goods.



ALL IN THE EDITING A video from Tiger Lily Florist in Charleston, S.C., follows two cardinal rules of video: Keep overall video length to about two minutes and individual shots to no more than 15 to 30 seconds.

Video Tool Kit Staples

Creating videos that speak to your brand and your target customer requires less cash than you may think. If you have an iPhone 4 (or a later version) or an Android purchased in the last year, you already have the ability to capture high-definition video at 1920x1080p (progressive scan) — more commonly called, simply, 1080p.

Unlike a cumbersome video cam, a smartphone is portable — great for capturing setup shots on-site or moving around your store. The on-screen software controls are simple. You can edit videos on the go, without a computer, and you can upload the videos directly

to social media through your cellular or Wi-Fi connection.

No cameraman? No problem. Full tripods are bulky, so you may want to wrap your camera around a pole or handrail with a Joby Gorilla Pod (\$20) attached to another gadget called an In Your Face tripod smartphone mount (\$19).

One smartphone caveat: The phones usually have two cameras, and they aren't created equal. The front camera is usually lower quality (best for videoconferencing and selfies). The back camera provides the 1080p quality.

Another caveat is storage space. Capturing video will gobble up precious megabytes, even gigabytes, on your smartphone. (One minute of footage will be about 160MB; a six-minute clip will be about a gigabyte.) If you're due to purchase a new phone, get one with the largest capacity, 64GB or higher. On a regular basis, upload old photos and videos to your computer to clear space, and delete any unused apps.

Essential Video Apps

Once you're comfortable capturing video on your phone, start exploring the many apps that can help you create share-worthy footage. Here are a few options:

Video Capture Software: If you're an iPhone fan, download Filmic Pro (\$4.99) from the App Store. Filmic Pro gives you more control over variables such as white balance, exposure, focus and audio level. Filmmakers using Android can grab Cinema FV-5 (\$4.99), which provides similar functionality, from the Google Play Store.

Video Editing Software: Nothing beats Apple's own iMovie for iOS (\$4.99), which provides stylish templates and easy-to-use controls to make basic edits and insert transitions. The software's best function is easy sharing to Facebook, YouTube and Vimeo straight from the app. Android fans should check out the free WeVideo, which matches iMovie features and exports to Facebook and YouTube.



Follow the Light

When capturing video, your primary concern is always lighting. At your shop or at a venue, try to find indirect daylight to light your subjects (direct light is too harsh, and industrial tube fluorescents or incandescent lighting will make footage appear yellow). If you're inside, open every window shade or skylight and adapt the shots to use this light.

Regardless of available lighting, minimize bad video quality by setting the white balance and shooting your camera at a digital gray card; do this anytime the lighting changes (both Filmic Pro or Cinema FV-51 allow you to do this). Also, check out the Porta Brace White Balance card (about \$6).

Content Capture Best Practices

To save time, edit out unusable footage while you capture. When you're finalizing your video, remember that most people tolerate a two-minute video; 15 to 30 seconds is a good goal per clip. If you plan your shoot, you should have three to four great clips that you can piece together quickly.

Next month, we'll dive deeper into video as we focus more on content, increasing the quality of video through better production techniques and even setting up a mini video (and photo) studio right in your shop for under \$300. 📹

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VIDEOGRAPHER IN THE HOUSE (PART II)

> “Video is the future of content marketing,” wrote Chris Trimble, director of content at Axonn Media, in a story last summer for The Guardian. Among other points, Trimble highlighted that YouTube gets more than 1 billion unique visitors every month and that Cisco predicts videos will account for 69 percent of all consumer Internet traffic by 2017.

Floral industry business owners should capitalize on this resource, especially since we have such a beautiful, video-ready product to share. Last month, we talked about shooting video on the go with a smartphone; this month we’ll talk about the tools you need to shoot, edit and process professional-quality video in your store.



Upgrade Your Camera

While a smartphone is capable of capturing quality video (1080p), these gadgets are also limited by the size and quality of their lenses. If you want to upgrade, you have a few choices. While some people spend \$1,000, \$2,000 or more on video cameras, our recommendation is to save your money and invest in a dual-purpose **digital single-lens reflex (DSLR) camera**.

DSLRs offer better lenses and better digital sensors than smartphones, and that means better video. Of course, a DSLR will help you take high-quality still floral photography, too, making it a sound investment.

Canon fans should consider the T5i (around \$750, including the lens kit) or older models, such as T3i or T2i, which will also capture 1080p (around \$500, depending on the seller). Nikon fans may consider the D5300 (about \$700). Believe it or not, people are now shooting feature films with DSLRs. Check out one example at www.imdb.com/list/ls059550382.

Can You Hear Me Now?

For crystal-clear sound, the built-in mics on smartphones and DSLRs are adequate but not ideal. We recommend a **lavalier (LAV)** or **boom mic**.

LAVs are attached to the speaker’s lapel or clothing seam. The LAV we recommend (Audio Technica, ATR3350iS, \$26) has a 20-foot cable and is inserted into the cameras or smartphone headphone or mic jack. The boom mic (Audio Technica, ATR6550, \$55) may require an extra set of hands; for best results, you must point the mic at the speaker.

Light Bright

If you’re shooting video on the road or at a venue, you can’t always control lighting, so we recommend using indirect, natural sunlight. If you don’t have a spot in the shop that offers this, invest in a **lighting kit and backdrop**.

You have lots of lighting kit options. We recommend the ePhoto Video Studio Portrait 3 Point Hair Light 2000W Photo Kit with Case VL9004SB (about \$180). Search “Three Point Lighting for an Interview - Tutorial” on YouTube to learn how to set it up.

To ensure that you have a clean, consistent and professional background, you’ll need to buy a **backdrop**. Search for “video photo backdrop” and you’ll see lots of choices on backdrops and stands. Be sure that the backdrop width matches that of your stand — we recommend a muslin backdrop and stand that spans 10 feet.

Continuing Ed

Stepping up your video game can be a challenge, but many resources exist to help you. If you purchased a new Mac for this project, check out Apple’s <https://onetoone.apple.com> program (\$99). You can ask any question or be trained on any Apple software by one of the Apple Store Geniuses.

Tutorials for all the software mentioned this month can be accessed with a \$25 per month subscription to lynda.com. Free resources also are available through YouTube.



Computer Hardware Specs

Capturing, editing and processing edited video is intensive work for your computer. You may need to upgrade this equipment, too. Following are the recommended specs for any PC or Mac you buy: **Intel Core i7** (the i5 or i3 will double or triple processing time); **32 GB of RAM**, a Nvidia GTX 760 **graphic video card** or better and a **1TB hard drive** (or more) — video files are space hogs. For Mac users, consider the Mac Mini (\$799). It satisfies most of the specs but you’ll need to spend another \$60 to max the memory up to 32GB. For a **monitor**, get the Dell Ultrasharp 29 U2913WM (\$499). Working with video requires more width than height and this monitor is plenty wide.

Editor’s Cut

You’ll also need to invest in some video editing software. For PC users, download the free **Microsoft Live Movie Maker**. Mac users have the free **iMovie** program preinstalled on every system. Both provide basic editing tools and built-in functions to upload to social media.

If you need fancier fills, effects and transitions or more control over audio, consider Adobe Premiere Elements 12 for Mac/PC (\$99). If you’ve already paid for an Adobe Creative Cloud license to get Photoshop or another suite program, it already includes Premier Pro. Mac users also have another paid option in Final Cut Pro X (\$299.99). 🎬

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