



Audio is just as important as video

When it comes to video production many feel that video or film is the main objective. The picture is important, but so is audio. Try watching your favorite program with the volume turned down. You could probably get the just of what was going on by the action played out but would miss a lot as well. You'd soon realize how important audio is and how it complements the videos we watch.

So, what could be said about these two microphones? Yes, one is larger than the other, the larger one has many ridges on both sides of the microphone while the shorter of the two only has a few ridges (phase-interference slots). What are these microphones and when should you use them?

The longer microphone is a Super-cardioid condenser shotgun microphone. Super-cardioid refers to how the microphone picks up the sound. When a microphone has a super-cardioid pick up pattern it picks up sound mainly in the front of it, and somewhat on the sides of it, however, the sound picked up on the sides will be out of phase thanks to the phase-interference slots. The sound behind the microphone will be rejected do to the super-cardioid pick up pattern. So, for instance, If I were to point the microphone at someone who is mowing their lawn, the mic would pick up the sound of the lawnmower, and would reject the sounds behind the microphone (people talking for ex.)

Shotgun microphones are best suited for outdoors. Their long interference tubes (ridges on the side of mic) do a great job picking up sounds far from the mic, but when you use the same microphone indoors it can have a reverb effect on dialogue.

If you are interested in capturing audio from an interview indoors, you would then want to use the shorter microphone which is a hyper-cardioid microphone. Due to its size and it being a hyper-cardioid mic, it can reject reverb that is caused by rooms with highly reflective surfaces. It too is a condenser microphone (condenser mics need their own power to operate +48 volts, usually provided by professional cameras). It can capture sound directly in front of it, and on the sides, different mics will have different results. If you plan on capturing an interview, you would want the microphone to be placed on a boom stand. By using a boom pole, you can adjust the length just enough to place the microphone over the talent. You want to direct the head of the mic towards the talent's chest not their mouth. The further away you place the mic, the more noise you will get. However, if you place the mic too close to the subject you will get a proximity effect where the voice tends to sound too bass like. Usually you get good sound when the microphone is placed between 12-18 inches away from the talent,

this is also true for shotgun microphones. Too far away, and the dialogue will sound like it is captured in the distance.

Next time you want to record audio either indoors or outdoors, you'll know which mic to choose. There are some cases when you can use a shotgun microphone indoors when in a pinch. The thing to remember if you do choose to use a shotgun indoors is to keep the mic close to your talent when they are speaking (12 inches will do) and to make sure the room does not have too many reflective surfaces. If the room is too reflective, (tiled floors, hardwood floors, short ceilings etc.) you will need to treat it with sound absorbing blankets.

If money was tight and I only had the opportunity to buy one mic, I would choose a shotgun microphone.

Tips on How to Conduct a Better Video Interview

Speaking in front of a camera can make many people feel very nervous. This blog post will suggest some ideas to achieve better interviews.

It is important to screen each person you want interviewed. Screening is a good practice because someone who you thought may give great responses to your questions really didn't have much to say. Search for those individuals who will help tell your story with passion. Some folks really articulate well and have a special ability to speak on camera...these are the people you need to seek out. How boring would it be if all you got where one word answers?

This brings me to the next tip, ask open ended questions. By asking open ended questions you will get more than a No or Yes answer. An open-ended question could be, "Tell me what you like best about your job and why?" Do not ask, "Do you like your work?"

If you do not plan on using your voice to refer to the questions that are being asked, I suggest you have your interviewee answer the question in a complete sentence. By doing this, you allow the viewer to know what the interviewee is answering.

Whenever I plan on interviewing someone, I like to meet them prior to the interview. Many times, this is not possible, and you meet them the day of the interview. If this is the case, let your interviewee know that you are only going to have a conversation. We all converse, right? The only thing different is that the camera will be recording their responses. Many people feel at ease after I explain that we are just two individuals talking. While I get a sound check, I will ask them about their day, or how their summer was, anything to get their mind off what they are about to do. You need to warm them up before you start asking your questions. You never see baseball pitcher go directly into the game without warming up, do you?

I tend to usually have someone next to me ask the questions. This will allow the interviewee to speak directly to them and not the camera. If you cannot find someone to ask the questions you will have to do it. I usually move away from the camera just a tad, so that the interviewee can address me and not the camera. Make sure you keep eye contact, so they feel more comfortable. There is nothing worse than someone behind the camera looking down at their notes. It can feel weird talking to a camera, and

I tell all my interviewees that to look at me and not the camera. You only want them to look at the camera if they are addressing the audience.

Have some questions in mind but it's important to listen what is being said. You may find yourself wanting to ask a question about one of the answers that was given. Having a guide line is good practice, but you can always ask questions that may come up during the interview. Interviews can progress, and when they progress, they lead you to different territories that you may want to know more about.

Sometimes you may not get the answer you want, or the interviewee didn't expand on a topic. When this happens, ask the question again later. It may be that the interviewee wasn't quite comfortable and now after a few questions they have warmed up to you and feel much better about the interview.

Once the questions have been asked, I like to ask if the talent has anything else, they want to say. Sometimes you can get great responses and sometimes they just want to be done with the interview.

Quick Overview

1. Screen your potential interviewees
2. Ask open ended questions
3. Keep eye contact while the interviewee gives their response
4. Feel free to ask questions you think of on the fly
5. Ask the question again for a better response if need be

5 tips to help you make a better video

1. Do not zoom in and out of your shot. Our eyes do not zoom. Move with your feet not with the lens.
2. Keep the shot steady. It can be sickening to watch a shot that is all over the place. Use a tripod or a sturdy surface such as a table.
3. Get your focus first and then press record.
4. Record things you are passionate about.
5. Use natural light if possible, to light your subjects. If you want to do an interview but do not have any lights available, have your subject near a window. This will produce the light needed for the interview.

Please contact me if you have any questions at the following links:

www.cookfilms.co

jeff@cookfilms.co

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