

The Buyer's Guide to

◀◀ VIDEO ▶▶

Production

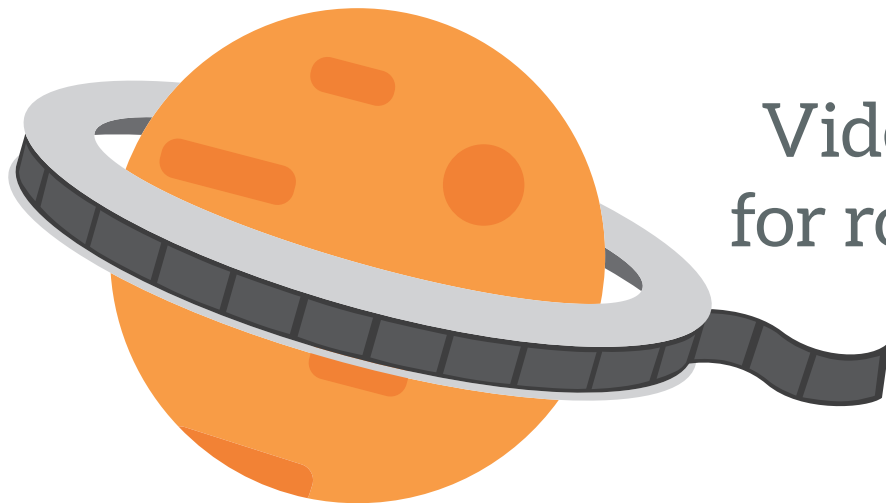
Your essential guide to finding
video production that meets your needs

| | |
|---|--------|
| ▶ Introduction | pg. 3 |
| ▶ The Case for Video | pg. 5 |
| ▶ Defining Video Goals | pg. 8 |
| ▶ Choosing Video Types and Styles | pg. 12 |
| ▶ Choosing a Vendor | pg. 18 |
| ▶ How to Budget | pg. 25 |
| ▶ Key Takeaways | pg. 31 |
| ▶ About Spark sight | pg. 32 |

We live in a world of **video**

From short animated GIFs to immersive VR experiences, it's nearly impossible to spend time online today without encountering a wide variety of video content. Video views on Facebook made a staggering leap in 2015, doubling from 4 to 8 billion.

While the prevalence of video has increased dramatically in recent years, the effectiveness of video content varies greatly. According to Gizmodo, over one third of all YouTube videos have fewer than 10 views.* We'll discuss how to avoid this pitfall later in the guide.



Video viewing accounts for roughly **70%** of global Internet traffic.*

This buyer's guide is intended to help you **cut through the clutter** and create the most *effective* and *sticky* video content possible

This buyer's guide will be most useful for marketing professionals who have limited or no experience working with video production vendors. But even if you are a seasoned expert, this guide is worth reading for the numerous tips and best practices covered. We'll provide you with an overview of each step of the video production lifestyle.

- ❑ Defining Success
- ❑ Making your business case
- ❑ Selecting a video production vendor
- ❑ Maximizing the reach of your video assets

So if your organization is considering video for its next marketing campaign, advertising initiative, or corporate event, read on to arm yourself with the best questions to ask and the key knowledge you need to be successful. It's time to dive in, and ignite your vision!

Read time: 15 minutes

Let's get started 



Take a quick moment and think of the last interesting banner ad you saw online or the last amazing white paper you read. Having a hard time? Of course you are.

While long-form documents can be helpful, and banner ads can compel you to click, they are rarely memorable. But if you try to recall an entertaining television commercial or a clever video online, many examples come to mind.

Video has the unique ability to paint a picture in our minds that other mediums just can't. Video is the ultimate way to push a message to your audience because of its entertainment value and simplification of complex content.

With video's direct connection to our brain's pleasure centers, it is no wonder that B2C and B2B websites today rely on video for at least part of this content.

Take a moment to consider the shift toward **mobile media** consumption



Modern marketers are shifting away from communicating messages through traditional web copy to showing you messages with video. Following that trend, consumers are also developing a preference for *watching* rather than *reading* online. The prospect of being entertained while learning about

an organization's products and services is enticing. Another big consideration is the shift to mobile media consumption. Unlike 10 years ago when bandwidth created challenges with video playback, today, watching content on a mobile device is actually easier than reading is on the *same device*.

The average daily time spent viewing video on mobile has increased by a **factor of 12** over the past 5 years alone.*



With consumers continuing to flock away from traditional television, the mobile device is becoming the most prevalent way to consume audio and video content. Consumers are checking their devices more often for compelling “snack size” content that they can

consume on the go, boosting your videos’ accessibility. For the savvy marketer, this means more opportunities to connect with your audience. But with so much great content out there, it’s not only necessary to have video, but it’s vital to be clever in your approach!

Video is the **key** to a successful content marketing strategy



Now that the importance of video is clear, it's time to ask yourself some questions. Answering these questions will help you define the goals of the project and the steps you will need to take in order to reach those goals. Successful projects are derived directly from effective planning, so when planning *any* video, these questions are the best place to start.

Each question on the following pages is accompanied by a brief explanation of its relevance. Since no two organizations are exactly the same, feel free to rewrite the questions, but try to keep the spirit of the “why” intact. By the end of this questionnaire, you should have a clear scope for your next project and feel comfortable moving forward.

1

What is the main goal of your video or videos?

Define the big picture - this is the map that guides the overall message of your video.

Answers may include: increase web traffic, raise conversion numbers, increase demo views, etc.

2

What is the deadline for completing your video?

Establish a clear timeline/end date to avoid delays and extra costs in the project.

Answers may include: yesterday, two months from now, by the start of the fourth quarter, etc.

3

What is your budget?

Having a budget and sharing it allows your vendor to give you the most that they can.

Answers may include: \$5000 for this video, \$20,000 for the year, my budget is unlimited for this project, etc.

4

Who is your target audience?

Knowing your audience helps when it comes to establishing messages, tone, and style

Answers may include: millennials, current prospects, sales professionals, etc.

5

Who are the key project stakeholders?

This is necessary for knowing how to structure meetings, pitches, and reviews.

Answers may include: only me, the marketing team, account executives, etc.

6

How will you distribute and promote the video?

Having a budget and sharing it allows your vendor to give you the most that they can.

Answers may include: email campaign, social media schedule, TV or web streaming, etc.

7 What does your video's success look like?

Keeping goals forefront of your mind in this process will keep you on track for success.

Answers may include: number of views, click-through rate, etc.

With these goals set, your project execution is one step closer to being completely seamless. Your answers will be the guide to success for your team and your video production vendor. Referencing your answers will be helpful as you make strides toward completion.

Now that your project has taken shape, you can start to determine the finer details that make your video unique and memorable. Next, we'll take a look at the different **types and styles** of video and how to combine them for the best outcome.

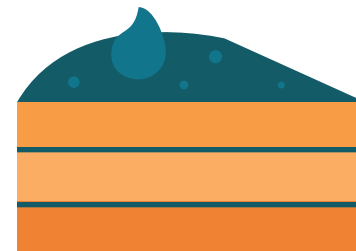
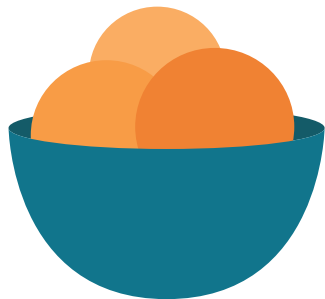
Let's talk about dessert

As you consider the finer details of your video, it is important to understand that there are a variety of *types* of videos you can produce and a variety of *styles* by which to accomplish them.

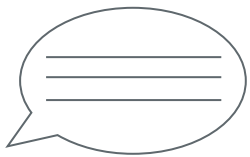
The video types are like dessert itself - ice cream, pie, or cake. The style is the dessert's flavor, like vanilla, cherry, or red velvet.

For the sake of this guide, we have listed some of the more popular types and styles of video in the table on the next page.

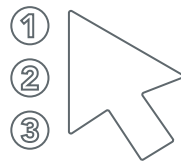
Please note that most types of videos can be implemented in most styles, but some styles lend themselves better to certain types. We'll explore this idea later in this section.



Types of Video



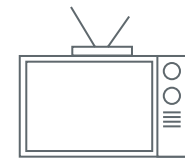
Explainer



Demonstration (demo)



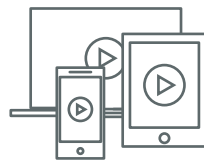
Company Overview



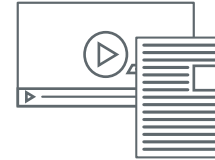
Broadcast Commercial



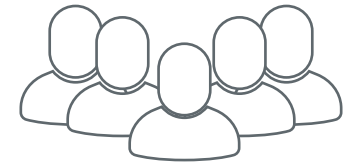
Web Commercial



Marketing Campaign



Testimonial/Case Study



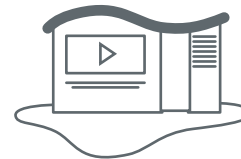
Recruitment



Social Media Short



Highlight Reel

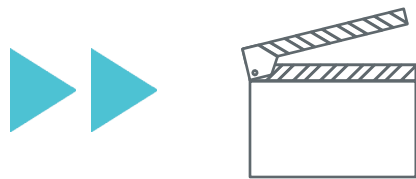


Trade Show Loop



Event Opener

Styles of Video



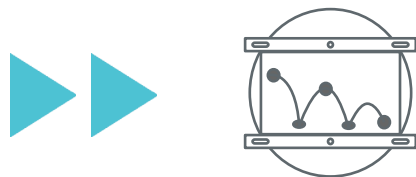
Live Action

- Best for
- Company Overview
 - Event Opener
 - Marketing Campaign
 - Web Commercial
 - Broadcast Commercial



Narrative

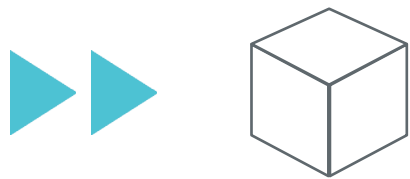
- Best for
- Web Broadcast
 - Company Overview
 - Recruitment
 - Explainer



2D Animation

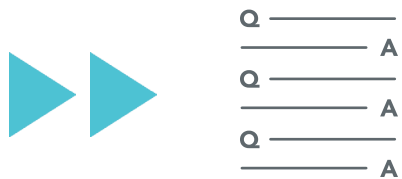
- Best for
- Explainer
 - Social Media Short
 - Demonstration
 - Marketing Campaign
 - Web Commercial

Styles of Video



3D Animation

- Best for
- Demonstration
 - Explainer



Interview

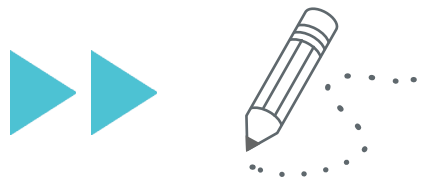
- Best for
- Testimonial/Case Study
 - Company Overview
 - Recruitment
 - Highlight Reel



Screen Capture

- Best for
- Web Commercial
 - Demonstration

Styles of Video



Hand Drawn

- Best for
- Explainer
 - Demonstration
 - Company Overview
 - Marketing Campaign
 - Social Media Short



Multi Screen

- Best for
- Trade Show Loop
 - Event Opener



Stop Motion

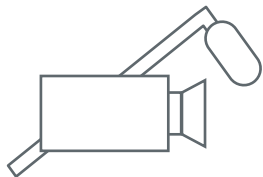
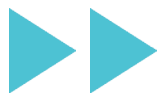
- Best for
- Explainer
 - Company Overview
 - Marketing Campaign
 - Web Commercial

Styles of Video



Virtual Reality

- Best for
- Demonstration
 - Social Media Short
 - Trade Show Loop



Documentary

- Best for
- Testimonial/Case Study
 - Recruitment
 - Broadcast Commercial
 - Marketing Campaign

Let's talk about vendors

N

ow that you have spent time assessing your needs, goals, and budget, it's time for you to consider if working with a vendor is a good fit. There are some times when a "DIY" look is appropriate, and we sometimes recommend to clients that they shoot some footage themselves.

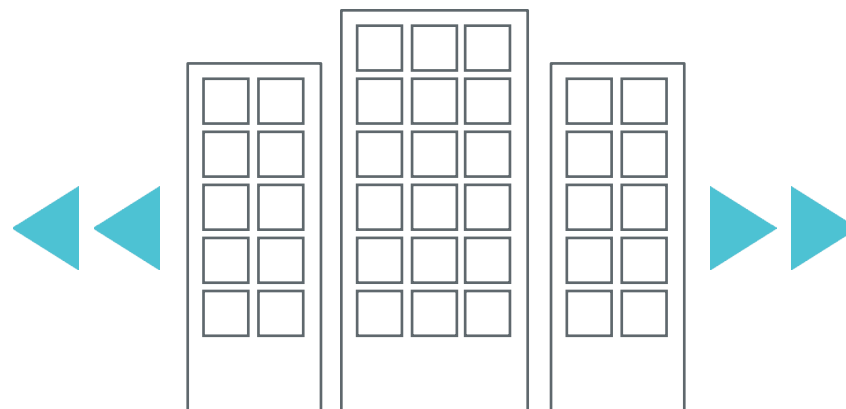
But, this is not the case for *every* video. Generally, if the expectation is for the video to look "professional," (a loaded and subjective word) working with a *professional* video production vendor is a good choice.

Vendors have access to an abundance of resources that most internal marketing teams do not. When you're uncertain of which route to take, it's always better to be safe side than to risk compromising your marketing efforts. But, how do you choose?

Selecting a video production vendor is **difficult** but wildly important to your **success**

There are many choices when it comes to video production vendors, and ultimately, your final selection will play a significant role in the success or failure of your project.

Next, we'll explore a series of important questions to ask during the selection process to help find a vendor that will work well for you and your team. Read on to arm yourself with the questions you need to succeed.



How strong is their

PORTFOLIO?

While this is the most obvious, we believe it is the most important first step in selecting your video vendor.

- ❑ Do they have a variety of video types and styles in their portfolio, or are they a “one trick pony?”
- ❑ Does their work have the production value that you are looking for?
- ❑ Do they work with and understand other organizations in your industry?

Of course, portfolios shouldn't be your only deciding factor, however they are a good way to eliminate vendors that *don't* satisfy the standards you expect.

Establish your minimum standard to know what you're looking for. Make lists of videos you like and those you don't. Take the time to shop around. Your projects reflect you and your company, so don't settle for less than you expect.

Who are they likely to

WORK WITH?

When hiring a vendor to help you bring your creative marketing vision to life, you are entrusting them with your valuable ideas. Understanding your vendor's client relations is imperative. While your audience will see only the final product, you will be knee-deep behind the scenes with the vendor you choose.

The most telling sign that a company is easy to work with is their portfolio of long-term clients who come back year after year.

So, to avoid being dragged through the mud and look for a company that...

- Communicates well and often
- Understands your industry
- Commits to long-term business relationships

Look closely at your list of possible vendors and be sure to consider their rosters of clients. Can't find a client list? Don't be afraid to ask for references.

Are they a good fit for your **BUDGET?**

The budget for any project can vary greatly depending on what you want and the vendor you hire to do it. While budget is an important consideration, *it should not be your main consideration*. Vendors vary in how they present their pricing, but generally the price is based on the time and materials it will take to create the final product.

Don't be afraid to ask for a detailed breakdown of each quote that you receive, especially if one quote seems wildly different.

Ask the vendors what *is* and *is not* included in their quote including items like

- Actors
- Music
- Voice over talent
- Source files

Knowing this will ensure you are comparing apples to apples to avoid being surprised by a low bid that doesn't include everything that you wanted.

Are they creative and business

SAVVY?

The last thing you want is a video that is trendy, but lacks appropriate message delivery. You also want to avoid creating a video that is on-message, but so dull that no one bothers watching through to the end.

Choose a vendor that has a complete understanding of both cutting-edge creativity and the tried-and-true business skills that pay the bills. A vendor versed in modern marketing will produce quality content that meets your needs and propels your marketing in the right direction.

Ask your vendor what experience they have in marketing tactics such as

- Marketing automation
- Marketing campaigns
- Integrated advertising
- Social media strategy

A marketing savvy vendor will provide you with a product that meets your business goals and keeps the interest of your audience.

Finally, listen to your

GUT.

Once you've reviewed budgets, portfolios, references, and processes, it's time to **make a choice**. Sometimes your choice will be obvious and sometimes you may have several vendors in the running right up until decision time.

Once you reach the end of your *objective* analysis, then it's time to switch to *subjective* analysis. At the end of the day, hiring an vendor to fulfill a creative business mission has a *personal element*. All things being equal, picking a qualified team that you

Think about your interactions with each of the agencies and use these questions to make your choice.

- Who had the best response rate?
- Who did most to understand your needs?
- Who seemed confident without being cocky?
- With whom did you feel most connected to?

Hiring an vendor to fulfill a creative business mission has a *personal element*, so picking a qualified team that you enjoy working with is never a bad choice!

Budgets and timelines



As you close in on beginning your project, defining your timeline and budget are essential. In many ways, these two things are interconnected and one may even influence the other in certain cases.

If your timeline is aggressive, you may incur rush fees. If your timeline is lax, the project may drag out for too long. The key is to define both of these variables early in the process to avoid either of these situations.

The good news is that there are many actions you can take to ensure your desired outcome when it comes to your video budget and timeline.

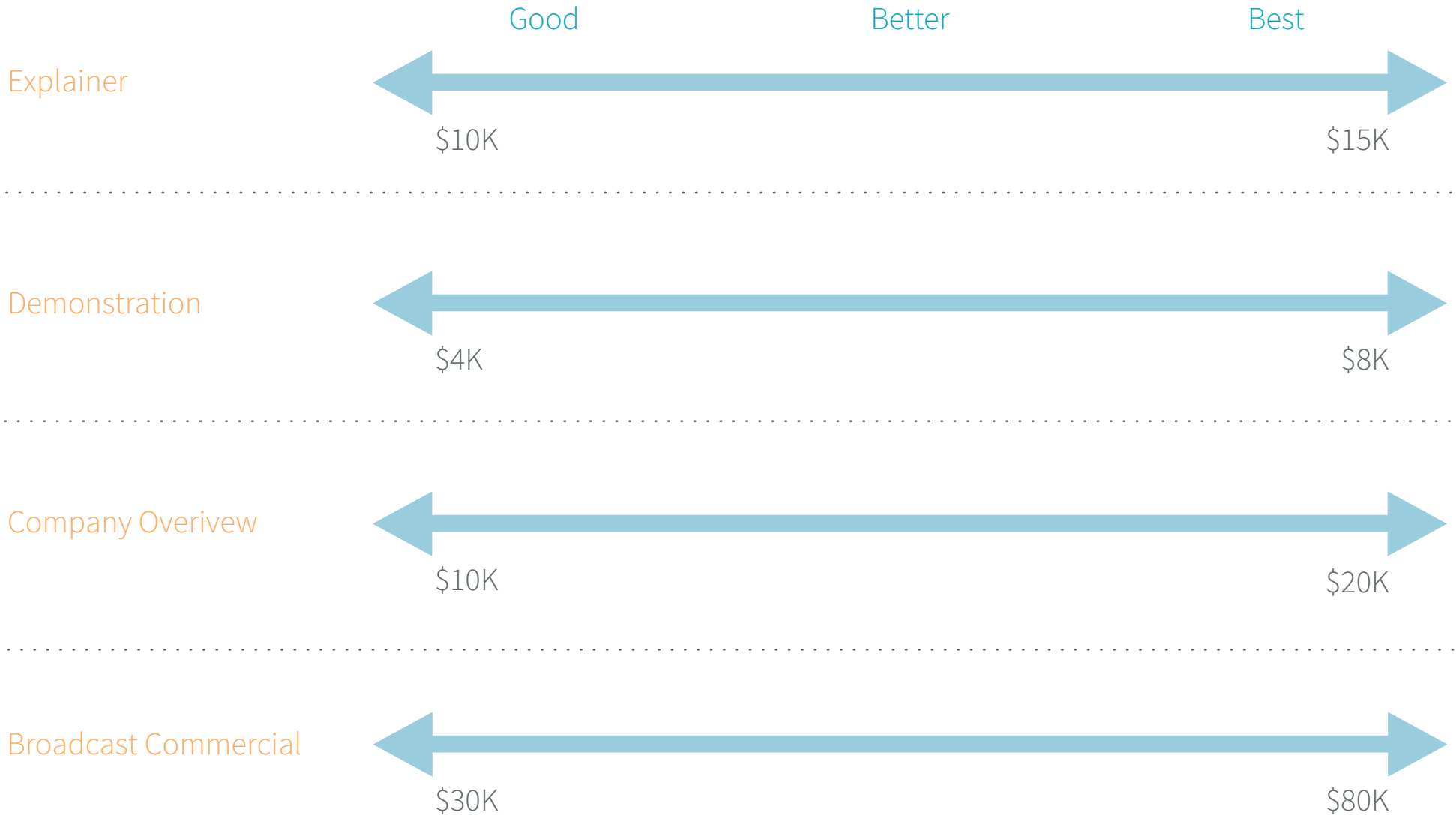
Generally speaking, most marketing videos take **4 – 6 weeks** from the project kickoff call to the delivery of the final assets.

Budgeting for different types of video

As you know, video production cost can vary greatly depending on your vendor and the type of video you choose for your project.

In the following pages, you'll see arrows that represent the price range you can generally expect for each type of video.





Good

Better

Best

Web Commercial



Marketing Campaign

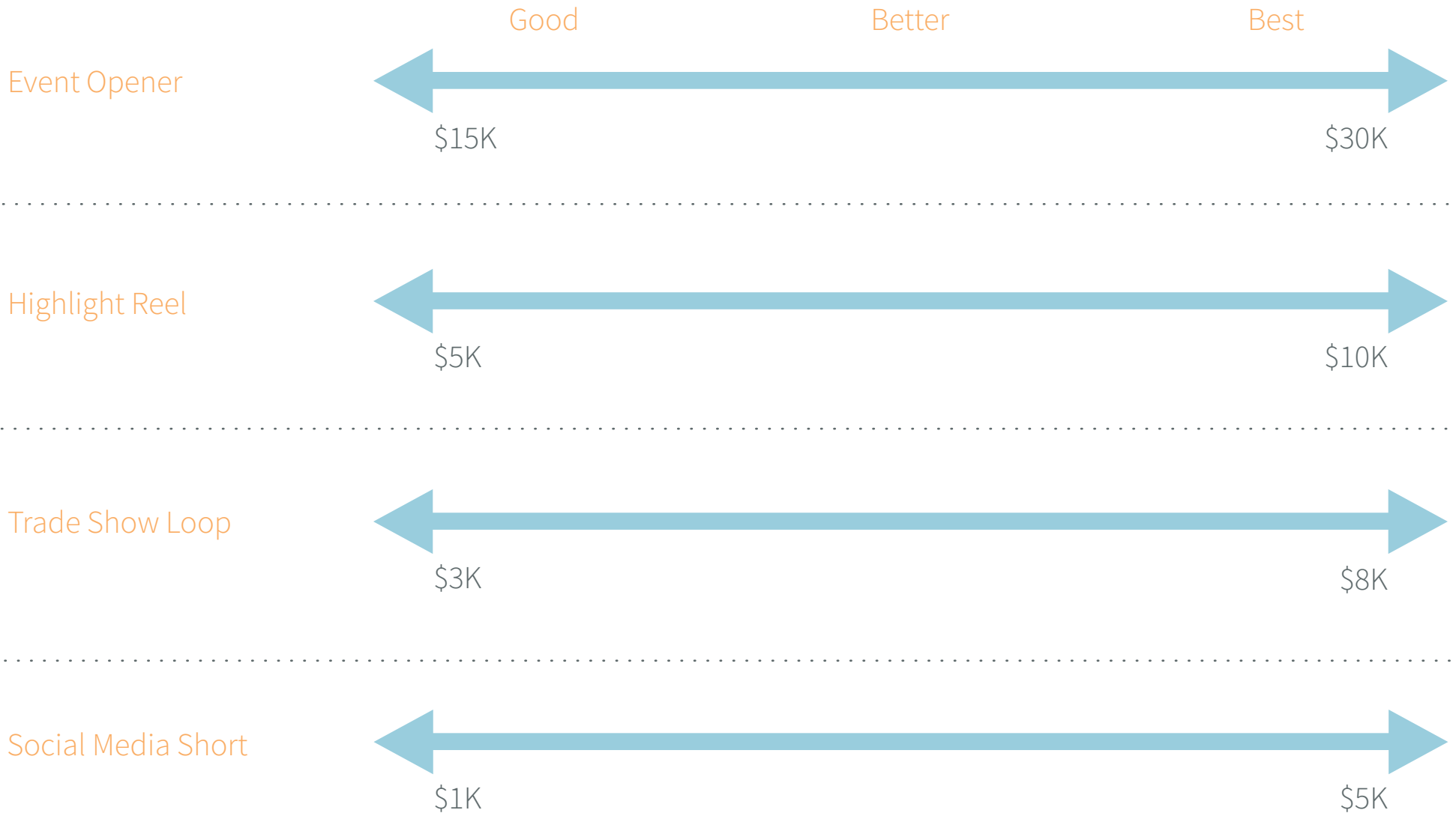


Testimonial/Case Study



Recruitment





Manage these items **efficiently**, and your project will be **on-time** and **on-budget**.

- ▶▶ Include **all stakeholders** in your project kickoff to avoid misunderstandings about goals, budget, and timeline
- ▶▶ Define the **key message(s)** for the video early in the process
- ▶▶ Take the assessment in this guide to **define your goals** and nail down the big picture guidelines for your project
- ▶▶ Define a **creative direction** and stick with it
- ▶▶ **Collect assets** to share with your vendor including any content that will help to paint a clear picture of your vision
- ▶▶ Consolidate and **deliver feedback** to your vendor quickly

▶▶ Video is becoming more prevalent online every day, and creating video content for your organization is a necessary part of any marketing strategy.

▶▶ Take time to answer important questions up front - this will save time *and* cost during the video production process and keep your project on task.

▶▶ Don't hesitate to shop around for your best fit vendor, and ask the right questions in the process. This is not a decision you should take lightly, as your video content can make or break your marketing plans.

▶▶ There are many types and styles of video, and a good vendor will help you understand your options and match them to your business goals and needs.

▶▶ You can directly impact the timeline and budget of your project by being proactive and maintaining an effective line of communication between you, your team, and your video production vendor.

▶▶ Creating a video for your organization is a rewarding undertaking. Understanding the process and working with the right vendor will help you both enjoy the creative process *and* reach your business objectives.

If you have further questions or would like to dive deeper, please feel free to **reach out** ▶▶



Video production is core to Sparksight's business. Since 2007, Sparksight has specialized in a variety of commercial and marketing video styles including live action, animation, customer testimonials, event videos, and live streaming. By continually honing our craft and keeping up-to-date on the ever-changing market, we have been able to help a myriad of clients tell their stories through video.



7718 Wood Hollow Drive, Suite G100, Austin, TX 78731 // 512.493.2070 // www.sparksight.com