Is it true that audio is more important than video in my production?

In a word... YES!

A video primarily has two significant elements: Picture (visual) and Sound (audio). While shooting a video it’s important to give significant attention to both the audio and visual aspects of your content because, believe it or not, the audio is just as important (if not more important) than the video. Most inexperienced video entrepreneurs make the mistake in the beginning of their careers focusing a lot on capturing the best quality visuals for their videos and, all too often, completely blow the sound.

The audio is usually neglected because of the misconception that the success of a video production highly depends upon the quality of video.

In reality, even if the video component has some flaws and turns out much less than perfect (pixelated, grainy, out of focus, under-exposed, etc) but the audio is clear, at the right volume and free of distractions then the project can still be an overall success and can get positive results.

On the contrary, several studies have shown that if the audio quality of the video is of just medium to marginal quality, that no matter how good the picture turns out viewers are more likely to reactive negatively to the video content as a whole.

It’s clear that the success of your video rests more with the audio quality
than the video. It’s counter-intuitive but audio is more important than video but if are having a hard time believing that sound isn’t more important than the picture, then it is at least as important.

Here are 5 Video Entrepreneur Magazine’s tips for recording superior quality audio for your video production:

1. Voice-Overs are Easy and Reliable!

There’s no doubt that while shooting video and sound in an outdoor location, recording high quality audio can be quite difficult. However, with a little preparation, you can prevent a potentially disastrous situation. Perhaps your best option in windy or noisy outdoor environments is to record most of your audio track indoors, or in-studio, and simply apply it as a voice-over. In other words, you will be recording the audio off-camera separately in a different location and later add it to the video during the editing process. I know several very successful video entrepreneurs that don’t even bother shooting video and use only b-roll or stock video clips that they’ve either shot previously or have purchased online instead. They tend to focus more of their time developing a killer script and recording great audio for their projects.

2. Set Up a Sound Booth

It is best to record audio in a small, carpeted room with wall treatments (pictures, curtains, etc) in order to avoid a harsh sound characterized by an echo. If audio is more important than video for you then you should be recording in some sort of studio. When it comes to make-shift recording studios, closets are actually the best choice.

3. Be Prepared and Have the Right Equipment

If your video production requires you to record your audio and video at the same place and time, then be prepared for the wind and ambient noises you
may very well pick up from the background. Try to choose a quiet location and shoot the video when there’s no wind if at all possible. Definitely use a dead cat, or wind muff, windshield which are microphone covers designed to minimize wind noise when recording in less than perfect wind conditions. Keep in mind that a little wind noise is enough to ruin your audio track and is almost impossible to edit out. With most camera configurations you can monitor the quality of your sound during or immediately after recording using a pair of headphones. They’re a pretty cheap insurance policy against leaving the shoot only to find out that what you’ve recorded is essentially garbage.

4. Get Close!

Getting the microphone physically closer to your subject ensures better audio quality, less background noise and better fidelity in your sounds. Although, a full length body shot may seem like a better option, the audio quality will be affected, since you will be far away from your mic. Make it a point to plan your outdoor shots at a closer distance to the camera if you must use a smartphone, iPad, tablet or other mobile device or your camera’s onboard microphone.

5. If You Are Going to Be a Video Professional, Use Professional Gear

Most of the microphones built into cameras are omnidirectional and record unwanted sound from every direction, the microphones in mobile devices like iPads can be even worse. When recording audio dialogue a uni-directional mic is really best. If audio is more important than video in your situation, the perfect situation is to use even a decent quality off-camera directional microphone plugged into a separate audio recording device. The second best option would be to use a microphone plugged into your camera. For professional video content creators and entrepreneurs running video businesses, we consider an external microphone a MUST HAVE piece of gear.
See this Video Entrepreneur article: Different Types of Microphones – Which Will Work Best for Your Video Production? for more information about the different types of microphones that are available and an in-depth discussion about which ones will work best for your specific video production needs.

Of course it should probably go without saying, but you should also start getting as comfortable with your audio editing software and apps as you are with your video editing apps – or make fast friends with an audio engineer.

Do you think that audio is more important than video? What is your favorite audio recording set up and what is working best for you? Sound off in the comments below! We want to hear what your thinking.