Making the Video of My NACCE Talk

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The Background

In 2018, I was fortunate to be selected to speak at the NACCE Go West! Conference in California. The topic, "Let's Teach Entrepreneurship, Not Small Business" was important enough that I wanted to record and post it to YouTube, which I ultimately did. You'll find it if you do a search on the name of the talk.

After having seen the video, NACCE asked me to write-up how I did it so that others can do it too. I must say that while it was something that I just whipped together, some may find the process complicated, and others may find other ways to do it altogether. Ultimately, there are no right or wrong answers in how to do this. At the very least, my hope is that this write-up will encourage others.

Considerations

Recording a conference presentation can be as simple as propping up a smartphone and pressing record or as complicated as a sophisticated video production. When deciding on how to move forward, the place to start is by defining how it is supposed to look and sound at the end. A few things to consider:

- **What is the purpose of the recording?** If it is to be used to critique the presentation performance, propping up the smartphone may be just fine. If it is to record and present your expertise professionally, then the quality of the video and audio become more important, and along with it the sophistication of the set-up. In my case, I wanted something of better quality, but even so, everything I used was consumer-grade, which still yielded acceptable results.
- **What are you trying to record?** Is it an indoor talk with projected slides and little physical movement? Is there dynamic activity in several different directions? These affect how you go about capturing the video and audio. In my case, it was just me doing a talk with slides, along with some room discussion.
- **How much expertise do you have access to?** Notice that the question was not "how much expertise do you have?" We are entrepreneurship instructors. We teach resourcefulness, flexibility and creativity. Don't be afraid to apply it. And just because you may not have the expertise or equipment, remember that you likely know people who do.
- **How many of the pieces do you already have and what needs to be "acquired"?** In my case, I already had the digital video camera and tripod. I

already had a smartphone for recording audio. My MacBook already had video editing software. All I needed was a microphone to work with my smartphone. Again, we are entrepreneurship instructors, so get resourceful. Just because you don't own something doesn't mean it can't be obtained through begging, borrowing or favors. Do the stuff you tell your students to do.

Obviously, there are other considerations, but these are the big ones that come to mind. And don't be afraid to ask a friend who knows video production for help in thinking and carrying it through.

The Tools

First of all, some disclosure – Many years ago I was an engineer…..a broadcast engineer. While I plied my trade in radio, I do have a very rudimentary understanding of how video production is done. And as a longtime entrepreneur, I've learned to cobble things together. That's what I did here.

The tools I used were the following:

- **A digital video camera**. Mine is a 5-year-old consumer camcorder that records video in HD, which is pretty common these days, with a way for me to copy the video to my computer once I get home.
- **A tripod**. I just put the camera on the tripod, put the whole thing on a table in the back of the room and aimed it at my "stage".
- **My smartphone**. I have an iPhone, which has a built-in app to record audio. I transferred the audio to my computer once I got home.
- **A lapel microphone**. I bought it from Amazon for $12 and plugged it into my smartphone. This allowed me to get clear audio of my talk without a lot of room noise or other distraction.
- **My MacBook**
    - **A slide presentation app, like Keynote or PowerPoint.** To create the opening and closing graphics for the video.
    - **The iMovie app on my MacBook**. To produce the video, with the video from the camera, the audio from the smartphone and the title graphics from the slide presentation app.
    - **The Audacity app on my MacBook**: If needed, audio files can be edited using the open source application Audacity.

Test BEFORE Leaving Home

Assemble your kit while still at home and with plenty of time to work out the bugs. Set it up. Take a video with the audio. Transfer it to your computer. Produce a test video on your computer with video, audio and an opening slide graphic. Try out different microphone placements (in my case, the mic was too sensitive which is

why you see it below my chest in the video). In other words, learn how to pull it all together and figure out what works before leaving home. Get help if you need to. Then, write down whatever instructions you need to remember to set it up properly.

Recording the Breakout at the Conference

Most of this may seem obvious, but it's good to explicitly outline.

- Charge up the batteries on the camera and phone before leaving your hotel room.
- Get to the breakout session room early to set up. If there isn't enough time between sessions, set everything up in the hallway and just carry it in as soon as the prior session ends.
- Set the camera/tripod up on a table that has a reasonable view of the "stage".
- Wait to turn on the camera and set it to record until RIGHT BEFORE the breakout begins. That will maximize battery life.
- Turn on the audio recording app on your smartphone.
- Turn to the camera, with audio and video running and clap your hands once or twice. Matching the video and audio of the clap they get lined up in the editing process. This is why they have the "clapper" device at the beginning of each shot on movie and TV shoots.
- Do the presentation.

Producing the Video at Home

The actual editing and creation of the final video happen at home. You can do it yourself, or you can find someone who knows how to do it, such as a friend, student, colleague, or your new best friend that you met at the bar during the conference.

- **Copy the video from the camcorder to the hard drive on your computer.** Keep in mind that video files will be big. It the hard drive space will be bigger, because you'll not only have the raw video file, but also the produced file. Don't be surprised if it eats up 100MB or more. The good news is that once you're done, you can either delete or copy the files to an external drive.
- **Copy the audio from your smartphone to the hard drive on your computer.** Audio files are much smaller.
- **Create the opening and closing title slides in PowerPoint, Keynote or another app.** Output them in JPG or PNG format to your hard drive.
- **Edit in iMovie or your preferable video editing app.** If you don't have one, you can try an open source video editing app such as Kdenlive (which is free).
  - From here, things get somewhat technical, but they are certainly doable by someone with either some video editing or other technical experience. Don't be afraid to ask for help from someone nearby who is knowledgeable.

- o You may need to convert the video or audio files to formats recognized by your video editor. That is a technical process, but can likely be achieved via open source applications such as VLC, Handbrake or FFMPEG.
- **Output a final produced video to a file on your hard drive.** Yes, this will be a big file.
- **Upload to YouTube.** It is often best to upload a produced file to YouTube than to have your editing application do it. In my case, the editing program took so long to process the file during upload that the upload timed out before it was done. Outputting the file to the hard drive and then uploading to the YouTube website worked much better. It will still take quite a while, even with a fast internet connection.

Some Final Thoughts

A few thoughts…

- Stuff happens. Sometimes, even with the best preparation, cameras run out of batteries or we forget to record the audio. The world won't end if the presentation isn't caught on video. The live performance for the people in the room is what's really important.
- For some, this process and the attendant technology can be intimidating. For others, they do this stuff in their sleep. Whether you can or can't has no bearing on your expertise, unless you're in the video production business, which then would lead to an entirely different discussion.
- If you haven't produced a video before, treat this as a learning experience. Give yourself room for discovery, mistakes and a little bit longer road to success. It's OK to be the student.
- Finally, have fun. If doing all of this leads to stress, set it aside or get others to do it.

In any case, I hope this write-up is helpful.

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