

CHAIRMAN'S AWARD VIDEO PROJECT
GUIDELINES + HELPFUL TIPS

- A. INTRODUCTION
- B. PRE-PRODUCTION
- C. SHOOTING TIPS
- D. CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS
- E. POST-PRODUCTION
- F. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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A. INTRODUCTION

The Chairman's Award is *FIRST's* highest honor. The Chairman's Award Video is a celebration of your team, your mentors, your sponsors and your school. Hopefully, your video will help other teams understand what it takes to become a Chairman's Award winner.

The Chairman's Award video focuses on *FIRST's* core values:

- Building and Sustaining a Team
- Helping Others
- Spreading the message of *FIRST*
- Mentoring
- 'Gracious Professionalism' and 'Coopertition'

If your team wins the Championship Chairman's Award, your video will be shown to over 25,000 people at the *FIRST* Championship.

The goal is to produce your video at the highest quality possible – best sound, best picture – no apologies. The video will require creativity, careful planning, scheduling and a lot of hard work. Make your video something you and your whole team will be proud of when it's shown on the large screen at the *FIRST* Championship.

B. PRE-PRODUCTION

Here are some suggestions for how to approach the video:

1. Form A Video Production Team

You'll need a camera crew, editors, writers, and producers (scheduling/organizing). Have at least 3-5 students and at least one adult mentor involved all year round.

2. Gather All Production Materials

Camera, lights, microphones, editing software, headphones, etc.

3. Outline Your Script

Plan how you will portray your team embodying each of the Chairman's Awards core values.

4. Find A Theme

A theme will help tie your video together and give it a unique quality. Try using your team name, team color, team motto, music or a movie as a jumping-off point. Here's your chance to be creative.

5. Make A Schedule & Action Plan

List your team's scheduled events, competitions, demos, mentoring, fundraising activities, etc.

6. Assign A Camera Crew

Assign a crew to each scheduled event. (Preferably two people at the minimum, one person to hold the camera, the other to log the footage)

7. Start A Footage Checklist

This will help you keep track of what shots you've covered and what you still need. Keep it up to date as your production moves along.

8. Plan Your Post-Production Schedule

Post-Production includes editing, sound-mixing, addition of music, titles & graphics. Give yourself deadlines so you don't have to finish the video in a huge rush at the end.

NOTE: White Dwarf Productions will provide templates for shot lists, logging sheets, and a production schedule. These will be available on the *FIRST* website as well as a short video guide.

C. SHOOTING TIPS

1. Tell A Story

Frame your shot to communicate as much useful information in the picture as possible (who, what, where, etc). If the shot can be understood without narration or a subtitle it is telling a story.

2. Get Coverage

Film an event from several different viewpoints. You'll have a lot more flexibility in editing and much better chance at telling the complete story. There are three basic shots to include for full coverage:

Master – wide shot that tells the whole story (who, what, where)

Medium – focuses closer on the action (who & what)

Close-up – shows details of story (who or what)

3. 8 Second Rule

Whatever you're shooting, hold the shot for 8 seconds – don't zoom or move on. This will assure that no shot is too short to use in the final edit.

4. Camera Movements

Terms for basic camera moves:

Panning – moving the shot Left or Right

Tilting – moving the shot Up or Down

NOTE: To make sure you have plenty of options in editing, record each panning/tilting shot three times at different speeds – one slow, one medium and one fast take.

5. Tri-Pod

A tri-pod is always useful when setting up a steady shot. Although it's not always possible to use a tri-pod when getting the shots you need, here are the best situations for using a tri-pod:

- Interviews
- Establishing locations and wide shots.
- Smooth panning and tilting

6. Framing The Shot

Frame your shot before you start recording. You'll save tape space this way and avoid wasted time in editing. This is not always possible when shooting documentary footage in fast-changing situations.

7. Zooming

Don't overuse the zoom function. It's best to use zoom only when setting up your shots. If you want to use the zoom for a creative shot, that's okay, but do the same story shot without a zoom so you have a choice when editing.

8. Team Recognition

Help the viewer quickly recognize the team members in each shot. Team members should always wear team t-shirts on-camera. Also, try displaying a team logo/banner in the background whenever possible.

D. CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS

1. Sound

Avoid interviews in noisy locations. Try to find a quiet environment. There are two key tools you'll need to achieve your best sound quality:

a) Microphones

Avoid using the camera's built-in microphone. Most built-in camera mics are designed for very basic sound quality. They'll pick up a ton of background noise and the sound clarity will not be as good as if you use an external microphone. Ideally, use an external mic hardwired to the camera:

Lavalier Microphone: close-up, single subject

Boom/Shotgun Microphone: broad, focused sound for groups

b) Headphones

Always monitor your sound to avoid unusable recordings. Make sure to plug headphones directly into the camera while shooting.

2. Lighting

a) Indoors

Light your subject whenever possible. Front light and back light is best. However, if you only have one light, a single, front light can help enormously to highlight your subject and separate them from the background.

NOTE: Avoid any large windows in the background. They will wash out the picture and your subject will be lost. Instead, use light from the windows to light your subject from the front or from the side.

b) Outdoors

12 – 3pm is the harshest time for sunlight. Try to shoot outdoors in the early morning, or late afternoon up through sunset.

NOTE: Avoid having the subject facing the sun. This will result in the subject squinting and looking uncomfortable.

3. Interview Technique

a) Introductions

Have your subject introduce themselves at the top of each interview. Make sure they include:

- Their name
- The spelling of their name
- Their title or position (relation to the team)

b) Repeating Questions

Ask your subjects to include your questions in their answers. This will help to create a complete, self-supported sound-byte. It's better if you don't need narration to set up the quote.

c) Get Short, Interesting Quotes

There's no time in your video for extraneous talk and long-winded answers. Listen for the most interesting part of your subject's answer. Then ask them to repeat that portion in a shorter, more direct way if possible.

E. POST-PRODUCTION (editing)

1. Labeling

Keep track of each completed tape by labeling both the tape and its box. It's most helpful to include:

- Tape number
- Shoot Date
- Events contained on the tape

2. Logging

Keep a detailed log of all your tapes. Include the date, where the shot took place and a list of the subjects and angles you shot. This will help you quickly locate all the shots you need when editing and save you hours of time. Make sure to include:

- Tape number
- Event
- Starting timecode of each shot
- Description of each shot (action and camera setup)

NOTE: We'll post a log sheet template to the FIRST website for easy download.

F. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1. YouTube: White Dwarf Prods – Chairman's Award Video Guide (2009)

A video tutorial demonstrating all of the tips outlined in this guide.

LINK: <http://www.youtube.com/WhiteDwarfProds>

2. YouTube: White Dwarf Prods – The Original Chairman's Award Videos

Check out the White Dwarf Productions Chairman's Award Videos 2004-2009.

LINK: <http://www.youtube.com/WhiteDwarfProds>

3. Current TV - Documentary Production Tutorials

Current TV has a very useful website that contains video tutorials for making 5-minute documentary news shorts. These tutorials are relevant to the demands of the Chairman's Award Video Project.

LINK: <http://current.com/make/training.htm>