

**SCOTT ALEXANDER - HOW TO CREATE PROMO REELS THAT RESONATE**

**WHAT IS A PROMO REEL**

An organized series of sounds and pictures designed to create positive connections with the talent buyer demonstrating your competence and like-ability in order sell the experience of your live performances to achieve gainful employment

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS SCOTT ASKED TALENT BUYERS**

**HOW LONG SHOULD IT BE?**

Three to four minutes max for a Sizzle Reel  
Three to Six Minutes for a Promo Reel

**DO YOU WATCH THE WHOLE THING?**

If we need someone right away we may book you on the basis of the video and a conversation

If you hook me I am most likely going to ask for a longer video

Leave them wanting more

We see a lot of these things and we can tell a lot from how you present yourself

Some clients want to see your whole show so have a longer reel ready

**HAVE YOU EVER BEEN BURNED BY A SLICK PROMO REEL?**

100% of them said yes We prefer videos that show live interaction

Studio shot videos don't really tell us anything except what array of props you have.

A lot of people spend a lot of money on props and video production and zero time on building an entertaining act

**WHAT SHOULD BE IN THE VIDEO?**

Make sure the video shows what you are actually going to do.

Often we book an act and send the client the video and then when they get to the gig they do a totally different show than what is on the video

Some agents said they booked an act off of a video that shows all kinds of big illusions and they show up with a suitcase

There's no such thing as "I am the show!"

If the client is booking you off the video alone, make sure they know what they are getting.

Have one video for your stand up show and one for your illusion show

It is ok to show a variety of things on a sizzle reel, but when it comes time for negotiations, make sure you are clear as to what show you are doing

### **HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT TESTIMONIALS?**

I don't really care much what other people say about you I just want to see what you can do

If you have one or two nice quotes from a well known celebrity or company that's fine

Just don't go on and on with it.

Use some graphics or voice over to get it in, but don't dwell on it

### **HOW MUCH WEIGHT DO YOU GIVE TV CREDITS?**

Well, if you made it on tv at least you are doing something right.

These credits carry some weight especially AGT and for magicians Penn and Teller. Also well known talk shows like Kimmel and Fallon

But we don't need to see the whole appearance. Just show a clip or two. We don't need to see the whole thing

### **WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR PET PEEVES ABOUT VIDEO**

#### **QUALITY**

Grainy or shaky camera footage

Shot from too far away

Bad sound quality

Can't hear the audience reactions

Voice over and music on the video are too loud

Spend a decent amount of time, money or both on making the video look professional

### **SCOTT'S FIVE SHOW RULE**

Spend at least as much money as you would make from doing five shows on your promo video

If you make 500 bucks a show you should probably spend \$2500 bucks on your promo

If you make \$1000 bucks a show then spend \$5000 bucks on your promo

I cant afford that right now...you cant NOT afford it

If you do it yourself, make sure it looks clean, crisp and professional

You can make an amazing video with an iPhone 10 and iMovie nowadays, just make sure you know what you are doing. Take a few classes at the MAC store

### **OUTDATED**

Outdated music choices

Your video have old credits on them

If you were on Letterman or Leno sorry to say those are no longer very relevant

Use those clips sparingly

Check your humor ...

Whats your name...Susan...Can I call you Susan...Yes...How-bout after the show?...  
waka waka waka!

Check yourself before you wreck yourself

Times change and the public's taste and tolerance for certain types of humor change...  
be aware and self aware

If it fits your character (Mike Hammer) (Amazing Jonathan) then use it, but do know you will offend someone

I lost a corporate gig once because I said "crap" on my promo video

### **QUESTIONABLE MATERIAL**

Your sizzle reel should be applicable to a general audience

If you have some adult material then make a separate video just for that (comedians especially)

If you have a clean show and an adult show don't overlap the two in your videos. If you think something is too edgy for that cruise ship gig, it probably is

### **NO AUDIENCE INTERACTION**

We want to see how you are going to treat audience members

What kind of humor are you going to use

We want to see some of that

You don't have to show whole routines

Just 15-30 second clips of you engaging with onstage volunteers and talking to the audience

We want to hear your talking and banter...just not a lot of it

### **THE SEVEN KEY COMPONENTS TO A GREAT PROMO REEL**

#### **KEEP IT SHORT**

Make sure to keep it between 3 - 5 minutes

Keep the testimonials to a minimum

Keep the quotes to a minimum

Keep the TV credits but don't show the whole appearance

Keep it moving

Put your best bits upfront

### **SELL THE EXPERIENCE OF YOUR SHOW DON'T SHOW YOUR SHOW**

Give them a taste of the show but your clips do not have to be any longer than 15 to 30 seconds

Talk if you are a talking act

If you do some musical pieces show a few moments or highlights

If you are funny, show the audience laughing (fake it if you have to like AGT or Jibrizi does - Stage the audience)

### **PUT YOUR BEST STUFF FIRST**

If you have an amazing magic moment put it up front

If you are witty and funny and have a good audience reaction put it up front

If you get a standing ovation put it up front

If your personality is your strength then briefly talk right to the camera first

### **USE VOICEOVER AND TEXT TO TELL THE STORY**

Write out your script first

Use posits to plan out shots

Get the script recorded by a voice-over artist. You can find them on line inexpensively and hear samples

Lay down the voice-over tract and edit the pictures to match the action

Cement key thoughts by adding text to the video

Have a beginning middle and end

### **HAVE MULTIPLE VIDEOS**

Know what market you are going for and have specific videos tailored to those venues

Make the video look like you already work there

If it is a school assembly do a free show for a school or church and tape it in the environment

If its a cruise or casino make sure its on a good stage with good lighting

If its a corporate environment make sure it looks like one (Bill Herz - name badges)

### **GET YOUR FACE OUT THERE FIRST**

As human beings we are wired to recognize faces

When we meet people that is the first thing we see

On your promo video make sure your face is the first image they see

This will instantly make a connection with the buyer

That is why some of the people complained that the footage was shot from to far away. They couldn't see the performers face.

### **THINK IN SOUND AND PICTURES**

Paint the picture you want the audience to have by thinking of your act in pictures

Break the video down into visual and auditory images before you shoot the footage

Listen to your video without watching it

Watch the video without the audio

What can you learn from watching these elements separately

If you are a funny act make the video feel fun

If you are a mysterious act make it feel mysterious

Choose images and music that convey the feeling

Choose a voice over artist that matches your tone

Make the tone of the video match your act

Keep the end viewer in mind, and don't waste their time

Use smart choices of sight sound and tone to deliver that feeling to the talent buyer you are trying to sell

**Sell** the show ...don't **show** the show

Leave them wanting more

"People will not remember what you did or said, they will remember how you made them feel." -Maya Angelou

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