

Host Demos Preparing saves you time and money

Thank you for choosing Planet Video for your editing source.

This document covers the following questions regarding building a Host demo:

- Ensuring none of your tapes are Digibeta, D2, Digital-8 or DVC-Pro
 - Making your selections before the edit session!
 - Cueing your tapes and logging your footage
 - Limiting yourself to only three samples of each kind of piece that you have
 - Bringing in no more than 15 minutes of material
 - Building your own material from scratch
 - Bringing only three choices of music
 - Letting Planet Video choose your material for you (see End-to-Ends)
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Obviously, Host Demos are far different than Theatrical Demos. The latter focuses on character relationships, emotional beats, and the depth and span of an actor's range. Hosting demos are specifically about YOU. Although most of your footage is going to be of you talking about a specific subject, our job is to turn that collected material around and make you the subject; your personality, the way you interact with subjects and the interest you create in the world around you. Furthermore, although we recommend acting reels to be between 3 to 4 minutes, *hosting reels tend to be even shorter*. We have found that we can communicate everything we need to communicate within 2 1/2 to 3 minutes. Television magazines have become so quick and eye-popping, hosting pieces tend to be a little shorter, containing more information per square second than the average acting scene.

HOSTING DEMO RULES OF THUMB:

We have found that PARTICULARLY with host demos good preparation for the edit session is absolutely vital. This will not only save you time and money, but truly helps us to design the best demo possible. Below are some basic steps that will simplify the editing process and make creating your host demo much easier (and less expensive) for you. These are only rules of thumb and can, of course, be broken. Just remember that *the closer you follow them the faster and more creative we can be as your editors*.

1. Make sure none of your tapes are Digibeta, D2, DVCPRO or Digital 8.

Our studio can handle most of the common formats around today, including DVD, Betacam SP, Mini-DV (Recorded in SP only), DV-CAM, S-VHS, VHS, Hi-8 and Regular 8. Unfortunately, a new high-end format called Digibeta looks almost exactly like Betacam SP. Always check to make sure that your Betacam SP tapes **DO NOT SAY "DIGIBETA" ON THEM**. You WILL have to pay for any last minute cancellation if you've mistakenly brought the wrong kind of tape.

2. Make your selections before the edit session!

Obviously it is important that you select your best material for your demo. But how exactly do you know what that is? If this step seems daunting, don't worry – you probably know more than you think. If you're truly stymied, turn to the last page to find out how we can help you. Otherwise, here are some things to look for when going through your raw footage:

We can handle the following digital media:
Mini-DVs (SP only),
DV-CAM and DVDs

Cueing up
tapes = \$\$\$!

You owe it to yourself to set aside some time to pick your material.

Personality: Does the piece show off your personality better than any other *similar* piece?

Succinctness: How is your handling of the material? Do you achieve your goal (intro, toss, outro) more quickly and deftly than any other similar piece?

Relaxation: Do you feel relaxed in this piece? More than in any other similar piece?

Variety: Have we seen this before? Is this piece unique in terms of delivery, subject matter, location and style? Every frame of a demo should show us something new about you.

Look: Do you have many different looks? Casual, elegant, sporty, sloppy, charactery, sexy? Have we seen a particular look too many times before? Or perhaps the “lawyer” look is your most marketable asset and we should accentuate that asset.

Outtakes: Sometimes a candid moment can show a side of your personality we haven’t seen anywhere else in your material. Surprises and unexpected laughs or blunders can be turned into gold if we use them wisely.

3. Cue Up Your Tapes and Log Your Footage Within an Inch of It’s Life.

Once you know which pieces you’re going to use, it’s important that you know where they are. Logging your material to the extent that you can (after all, you may not have a miniDV deck at home) will save you **lots** of **time** and **money** (and help us preserve our equipment!).

If there is more than one piece on any tape:

1. Cue to the beginning of the first piece
 2. For VHS - Clear the VCR counter so that the first scene now reads 00:00 (MiniDV or other formats may not let you clear the counter so just write down the counter time of the first piece)
 3. Fast forward to your second piece
 4. Write down the counter time of your second piece, third piece, etc.
- When the last scene on a tape is logged:*
5. Rewind the tape to 00:00 (or the start of your first piece) and move on to your next tape.

It’s possible to edit material from past demo masters, but it’s always better to use your original footage. Ask us why!!

Most newer VCRs have a real-time counter which displays the actual elapsed time, (01:43:02) **DO NOT log with a VCR that displays 0000-9999**. If your VCR doesn’t have a *time*-counter, use a stopwatch and log the time it takes to play to the next scene. This takes longer, but still *saves you much money!!!*

4. Limit yourself to only three samples of each kind of piece that you have.

In demos, redundancy is to be avoided at all costs!!! We recommend you bring in no more than three samples of each type of shot for us to choose from. For example, an ideal demo will include **no more than** three of your best *intros*, three of your best *outros*, three of your best *stand-ups*, three of your best *tosses*, three of your best *bloopers*, three of your best *interviews*, etc. If you have a larger range of shows that you have done, i.e., Sports shows, Infomercials, Hard news, Entertainment news, Travel shows, Trade shows, etc., we can accommodate all of these types of pieces across those spectrums, covering as much of your material as possible in as little time as possible. In other words, avoid bringing in three intros from a sports show, three intros from an entertainment show, and three intros from a travel show. One of each will suffice, thank you.

Naturally, if your primary strength is interviewing then we should emphasize that strength with more interview clips, if your strength is sports stories, then lets gather more sports stories, etc. It all depends on the kind of material you’ve collected and WHERE YOU WOULD LIKE YOUR CAREER TO GO.

PLANET VIDEO can help you with your material. If you simply can’t decide, see our special section on preliminary selection appointments (next page).

Your demo should be no longer than three minutes!

5. Bring in NO MORE than 15 minutes of material.

If you follow the above steps this will probably not be a problem for you, but to save you time and money, make sure that you have winnowed your material down to no more than fifteen minutes TOTAL. Even this is quite a bit to pare down into a two and a half minute reel, but we have found that this is the most we can work with and still get you out the door with a hot demo in four hours or less.

6. Creating your own material.

With high quality video more readily available, it's easier to create your own footage. If your material is well shot, well lit and has good audio, we can give it the extra production oomph it will need to look like broadcast footage. Of necessity, this kind of work takes a little longer - cutting the material, layering effects, adding appropriate music - so we might not be able to finish your entire demo within the usual four hours. Fear not! We work as fast as we can and can always re-schedule a short finishing session later. As always, preselecting your material helps us a lot!

PLANET VIDEO CAN SELECT YOUR MATERIAL FOR YOU

What do I do if I can't narrow my footage down to 15 minutes or less!

We realize it is sometimes difficult to judge your own material so we can simplify things through a preliminary End-to-End session. This two-session process takes a little longer but it truly helps us create a spectacular demo for you. In the End-to-End session we record all of your potentially usable pieces onto a single 60 minute Betacam SP (This becomes your End-to-End tape – so-called because we are literally recording all of your pieces end to end). This provides us with a single, high-quality recording of all of your raw material, while allowing us to look at your material and make recommendations for your future editing session. Furthermore, it assigns time-code to each frame of your raw material which allows you to log your footage in a much simpler and sensible manner. The End-to-End session IS NOT AN EDITING SESSION. It is useful only if you feel you need our help selecting your best material or if you would like to back up all of your material on one high-quality tape.

E2Es are great for storing all of your footage on one high quality tape.

If you're unfamiliar with timecode, we'll be happy to help you figure it out!

A majority of your logging will take place during the End-to-End session as we see your material and give you our recommendations. Once the End-to-End is complete, we will make a VHS copy (called a "window dub") of your End-to-End. The window dub is merely an exact VHS copy of your End-to-End Betacam SP tape with the time-code of each frame printed at the bottom of the television window (hence, window dub). This allows you to view and further log the contents of your End-to-End for future editing.

Like the editing session, it is vital that you prepare for your End-to-End session by cueing and logging your tapes as much as possible. Please refer to the logging section (Step 2) at the bottom of page one. Again, this saves you time and money!

Now, your work is done! If you've followed these basic steps you're sure to have a great time with us... and end up with a genuinely kick-ass demo reel!

Again, thanks for choosing Planet Video!

Be sure to visit our web site at planet-video.com!