

Smile, You Are on Camera: Video Advice for Newbies

By Holly Singer, President of HS Marketing, Board member of The Hedge Fund Association, & HFA's PR/Marketing Committee Co-Chair, November 3, 2016.

After arranging and coaching speakers for numerous short videos filmed by Asset TV during two recent Hedge Fund industry conferences – Hedgeopolis in New York and Global Fund Forum in Bermuda – I wanted to share a variety of takeaways including media advice a/k/a speaking tips for newbies. Many of these short videos by industry professionals representing hedge fund managers, allocators, service providers and regulators reflected first time experiences on camera and were unplanned or scheduled on extremely short notice including hours or even minutes in advance. Overall, the presenters stepped up to the challenge remarkably well, especially with very condensed or no media coaching. Whether you are considering this type of opportunity for the first time, planning further videos or completely frightened of the camera lights, my observations and advice are designed to provide useful tips and help you avoid common traps.

1. **CONTENT: For this type of video clip, pick a topic to discuss; don't sell your product or service.** If you represent a fund manager, be very careful to avoid non-compliant performance-related or product-specific remarks that may be construed as advertising. By highlighting your fund, you jeopardize the private placement exemption (check with your legal or compliance advisor). Instead, focus on comments related to market trends or your investment strategy such as the opportunity set. If you are a service provider, pick a topic such as an industry development where you have expertise and can offer timely analysis. Instead of explicitly promoting your firm, product or service, give the audience actionable advice. An educational content approach will reinforce your credibility as a thought leader.
2. **FORMAT: Frame your video as a Q&A rather than a straight presentation.** Whether you are speaking alone or interviewed on camera, you can still formulate a couple questions and ask each of them rhetorically before addressing them. The benefit will be a structure that provides a roadmap with a clear progression for the viewer to follow, even if it includes only a couple questions about your topic or trend you plan to discuss. If you are sharing your speaker takeaways as a conference

speaker or highlighting a pertinent industry topic, follow your comments with a very brief overview of your company position, industry role and experience within this subject matter to reinforce your credibility and role as a thought leader.

3. **STYLE: While on camera, be sure to smile and speak expressively, showing enthusiasm for your topic.** It's easy to sound overly serious and dry, even monotone, but that approach is unlikely to keep the viewer watching your video.
4. **TIME: Viewers have short attention spans.** A single video length beyond two to three minutes may be too much to hold viewers' attention. Avoid undermining the impact of this opportunity. Keep your comments brief and strong. If you get carried away with your initial take on camera, plan to try again and be sure to ask the film crew to keep you informed of the length or provide you with a signal when close to the desired timeframe. They will help you avoid the common trap of speaking too long. If you are considering addressing several distinct topics, then it's best to create more than one video and label each accordingly. Keep in mind that the shorter videos and compressed topics are most effective for sharing via social media.

These tips are designed to help improve the impact of your video speaking opportunities and engage your audience in a meaningful way. Keep in mind that the use of multi-media such as digital video is a key communication tactic that can supplement other forms of message delivery and bolster your marketing plans. Video delivery, whether highlighting an article or marketing deck, is more engaging and may enable you to reinforce the prose or bullet points delivered in document format, leading to Communication Alpha® for you and your business.

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