

3 Tips for Capturing Authentic Real Stories on Video

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With the explosion of easy-to-use tools for capturing video and the non-stop demand for fresh content, you've probably started creating short videos to get your story out. In a [2014 recap](#) for ReelSEO.com, Carla Marshall estimated that nonprofit videos generated over 674 million views last year.

And if you don't have the endorsement of a YouTube star like [Tyler Oakley](#) or a sweet partnership with [Omaze](#) to connect celebrities with your cause, chances are you're turning to real people who have an intimate connection to your organization to tell your story.

Here's a few tips on working with real people to get authentic and compelling interviews on camera.

1. Prepare Questions

One of the best steps to take before pressing the record button is to draft a list of questions to guide your subject's narrative. You want spontaneity on camera but you also want to make sure you cover basic facts and key emotional touch points that will guide the narrative. Think about the beginning, middle, and end and draft questions around those key moments.

A great reference to start with is the hugely successful [StoryCorps](#) project. Since 2003, they've archived over 50,000 interviews with everyday folks and their oral histories have inspired a series of compelling animated videos like "[Facundo the Great](#)." Their website actually lists a ton of [great questions](#) to generate conversation.



2. Think About the Edit

Make sure your interviewer is listening with the final edit in mind. Be aware that a video editor will need to have context around your storyteller's responses to create a seamless edit.

In the real world, most people will answer a question directly. But in an editing session, you'll probably prefer to have your storyteller give some reference at the start of every take. The simplest way to do this is to play back the question. Playing back the question will take a bit of coaching at first; but stick with it. You'll appreciate not having to use a narrator or graphics to bridge narrative gaps. Once your storyteller gets the idea, they'll get more creative with their intros.



3. Go off Strategy

Most likely, you've chosen a real person because they have a rich story to tell about your mission. That's great. But he or she will also be able to share something on camera that's unique to them and totally unrelated to your strategy.

That's where the gold lies. Non-actors have a genuine ability to share unfiltered insights about themselves. So before you wrap your interview, ask your storyteller if there's anything they'd like to add. You might get a gem, a true emotional nugget that'll stir hearts in ways no one else could have imagined.