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Ways to Save Money and Profit from an Inspiring Audio, Video or Web-based Program

OVERVIEW

If you are like most individuals who want to create a program or a website, one of the first questions you may ask is “How much does it cost to produce a.....” My recommendation is - don’t ask - it’s the wrong question!

Here’s why.

Unlike buying an existing product that comes with a fixed price, creating an audio program, video or website is like creating an ever-expandable balloon. It will get as big as the amount of air you want to blow into it.

These tips are designed to summarise some key points that will support you in controlling this balloon without blowing too far and having the whole thing burst on you in a bang of disappointment, recrimination and wasted funds.

I invite you to read the tips and to consider and even challenge them. If there is a point that doesn’t make sense, please contact me via email and I will clarify it in a way that relates directly to your needs.

Class One Productions has an extraordinary team of in-house specialists who produce extraordinary programs and websites. By working with us you can achieve exactly what you require, you can save money and ultimately profit. However, no matter how good we are, we require a clear focus from you of your needs and desired outcomes.

These tips are designed to support that process and I hope they support you in planning an inspiring audio, video or web-based program.

REMEMBER WHEN READING THIS

All tips must be applied in the context of your plans. Your reason for making the program or building the site will colour the way you use these tips. So whatever you read, consider its relevance to you and call me or a professional you already work with to ask how these tips may apply to you.

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GENERAL TIPS THAT APPLY TO ALL CREATIVE PROJECTS

- 01) **Prepare your material** before you begin talking to a producer. Examine every resource you have at your disposal, whether it is audio, video or text. Review each resource and ask yourself the question, "How could this be used?"
- 02) **Know who your market is.** Is it families, small business, CEOs, males or females, homeowners, retailers, etc?
- 03) **Know the outcome you want for your project.** For example, is it designed to sell, to promote, educate, or all of the above?
- 04) **Know how you are going to market your product.** This is the biggest downfall of many projects. An individual is inspired to produce a program but doesn't know how to find their target market and 'sell' the program to them. This can also be a problem with websites. You need to consider how you are going to market and 'sell' the fact that your site exists through 'traditional' channels. It is an unfortunate occurrence that many businesses create products and sites and 'trust on luck chance and magic' that these sites will generate income.
- 05) **Know how you are going to sell (or give away) the product.** This mostly applies to audio or video programs. For example, seminars are a good vehicle but it requires a high level of confidence to sell a product to an audience. As an alternative, you could sell your product as a package included in the price of your presentation. Audio and video programs are also excellent as promotional giveaways to qualified prospects, especially in this day of CDs. A clearly defined marketing plan will support this process well.
- 06) **Know your budget.** A project can be divided into several stages meaning that you may not need to pay everything up-front. Website creation for example is an organic process requiring frequent updates once the template is in place. Having said that, you need to have an idea of how much you are comfortable spending, as well as how high you would be willing to go. I could write ten pages about budgets, but in my experience the project you are creating simply needs to be something you are confident of and proud to sell and show-off for years to come. If you put a little effort and cost into it up front, in years to come you will see the \$\$ return. In terms of the amount you should expect to be charged, be sure to shop around. If someone quotes a cost that is exceptionally higher or lower than everyone else's fee, then its time to ask some questions!
- 07) **Ensure you are collaborating with a producer or provider that can work with you.** You will be amazed how many web designers, studios and there are who can conduct amazing feats of technical wizardry. No matter who you choose to work with, you will always find someone who claims they could have done it cheaper, better, faster. But be aware that the core of a successful collaboration is in having confidence that the team you plan to work with can turn your raw material into a project that will have you proud to show and sell.
- 08) **Ensure the producer or provider knows what you are talking about.** Make sure the people you are talking to have proved that they can deliver in the area in which you need assistance. The Class One Productions core team specialises in producing programs and sites that educate, inspire and leave the user better for having experienced the product. This includes in-house corporate education programs, team communication, product information, seminar programs and so on. If you, for example, wanted to produce a music video I would recommend some other people to work with you. Be sure to work with people who demonstrate that they understand your culture and requirements.

GENERAL TIPS THAT APPLY TO ALL CREATIVE PROJECTS (CONTINUED)

- 09) **Don't expect more than a supplier can deliver.** If you go to a supplier who is technically excellent at compiling a program or building a site, don't assume they can provide you with improvements to your content. For example, at Class One Productions we have often had to tell clients to go and prepare more material and get clearer about an idea before we can move to the next step. If you believe you need to work with someone who can help mould your content in this way, check whether your potential supplier can deliver. Discuss the project in extensive detail with them. You will soon find out what level of input they can provide to lift the quality of your project.

- 10) **Don't get put off by the amount of work creating a high quality project involves.** The results are exciting, stimulating, rewarding and inspiring. The long-term leverage of a front-line or supporting program or site will save you time and earn you money.

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AUDIO PRODUCTION TIPS

- 01) **Take a bottle of hot lemon and honey into the studio with you** to help keep your voice fresh.
- 02) **Ideally have a producer who can help you mould your material.** Class One Productions provides this service and this is reflected in the standard of our programs.
- 03) **Be willing to 'slaughter' some of your material.** That is, don't be too attached to your content. Most audio programs lose momentum if the presenter has focused too much on a point instead of moving on.
- 04) **If you are recording an audio seminar** for use in a program HAVE A PROFESSIONAL DO IT! Did I make my point? Record it digitally and have it recorded professionally. The room for error is significant.
- 05) **Use music wisely in your program.** It serves to break up the flow and prevents your voice becoming a monologue.
- 06) **Do not succumb to the myth of 'digital'.** Just because something can be recorded on your computer or over the phone doesn't make it useable in a final program. The quality of the sound may not be good enough for a product.
- 07) **Plan your program to have maximum impact.** This may involve narration, editing and generally 'slicking up' the delivery of your content. Your competition is MTV and you need to keep a program moving even for the most committed listener.
- 08) **Divide your program into CD tracks** so that it is easy for a listener to go back to the beginning of a section, rather than having to go right back to the start, if they've needed to stop.
- 09) **If you are recording for cassette** (yes it is still a viable option) make sure Side 1 is longer than Side 2 and has a 'Turn Over' message at the end. There is nothing less professional than having Side 1 be shorter than Side 2 and then not have an instruction at the end.
- 10) **Consider whether you should read from a script or be interviewed** when you are recording your material. For someone not used to a studio environment, talking into a microphone can be very daunting. Alternatively, re-packaging a seminar can be the best option. Don't be attached to your method of delivery. The task of your producer is to create a product that gets your message across in the best possible way.

VIDEO PRODUCTION TIPS

- 01) **Don't be fooled by the 'Digital Revolution'**. Just because you can record something on a digital camera doesn't mean it is a product good enough to show potential clients.
- 02) **Choose the medium wisely**. Not all programs translate to video because sometimes it is inconvenient to look at them in length.
- 03) **Consider having the program available on disc** so it can be viewed on a computer. Video is a wonderful training and sales aid.
- 04) **Many of the points I have highlighted in the audio section are even truer for video**. One is the need to work with someone who can turn your raw content into a powerful product. Again, at Class One Productions we specialise in getting inside the mind of the viewer and powerfully build a relationship with your market and their needs.
- 05) **Work closely with your team**.
- 06) **Avoid changes**. They can add a significant amount to your costs. What may look like a minor change can take an extensive amount of time and add hundreds of dollars to the final cost of your program.
- 07) **If you are videoing a seminar**, use a professional and with the end product in mind. A video shot by an amateur will look amateur.
- 08) **Do not rely on camera sound** from one of those digital cameras. They are wonderful, but not when you are trying to create a distinctive and professional program.
- 09) **Prepare to be patient**. Creating a video program takes a lot of time, especially if there are a lot of elements.
- 10) **Keep an eye on every stage of the production** so that you cut down on the risk of finding a structural fault in the final program, costing you money and upset.

DUPLICATION, PACKAGING AND PRICING

- 01) **The packaging is an integral part of the final product**, whether a video or an audio program, and it will determine how much you can sell the program for. Work closely with the producer of the program or a marketing expert to assist in getting the packaging right.
- 02) **If the product is sold at events, make it big.** If it is to be given away, you may need much less.
- 03) **Spend time and money on the artwork** and the look of the pack. It will attract the eye and support you in the sales process.
- 04) **There is no right or wrong rule about which medium you use.** If given a choice, over 60% of Australians will request CDs, however audiocassettes are still an acceptable medium for some markets. Likewise for video, VHS is good but a CD (or DVD) is much more versatile. It really depends on your user's needs.
- 05) **Most people undercharge for their product.** Look at what is around - you will find prices ranging from \$50 to \$500 for the same amount of content. It all comes back to your confidence in being able to sell the product.
- 06) **Create a shortened version of your product as a promotional giveaway.** This is one way to really raise its profile. You need to do it as part of an overall marketing plan otherwise the effort is wasted.
- 07) **You can effectively promote your website by putting a small part of it on a CD.** This is a terrific way of introducing potential users to your products. Remember they will need to read it in their computer as it will contain links to the web. Again, you need to do it as part of a marketing plan otherwise the effort is wasted.
- 08) **Remember the postage and administrative cost** of distributing each program. Few people take this into account when doing their initial budget. Postage and admin can add around \$10 per product to your distribution costs.
- 09) **Help the prospect to find out what's in it for them if they buy your program.** On the front and/or back cover, you need to list the benefits clearly otherwise your prospects won't know why they should buy it.
- 10) **Use your time wisely.** If duplication and packaging are not your expertise, allow a professional producer like Class One Productions to do the work for you. This leaves you free to make money the way you best know how!

WEBSITE DESIGN

- 01) **Many of the tips in the above sections apply here.** However be clear on whether your site is geared toward marketing or selling. Marketing is a process of enrolment and selling is a specific action.
- 02) **It's a myth that if you build a website people will just come.** You have to market the website itself as part of your total marketing mix. Make sure you tell people about your site. Have it on all your marketing material such as business cards and brochures.
- 03) **Keep track of how your site is doing.** Using an easy survey software package such as zoomerang (www.zoomerang.com) you can compile all the necessary statistics to assess how your site is doing. Create your own newsletters and surveys to ask your customers what they want.
- 04) **Don't abdicate your marketing responsibility to the designer.** Have a marketing strategy and if you are not a marketing specialist then fill that gap with someone who is.
- 05) **Keep checking that all aspects of your site are working.** Use software and ask people to try it to see if it is consistent and user friendly. It's a waste of time and money to build a site that doesn't work.
- 06) **Be sure to collect the names of the people visiting your site** so you can build your database. Before you use the names, create a marketing plan so you have a purposeful way in which to use them. Also, if you make a promise when you collect names, keep it. If you haven't, it will reflect poorly on you later.
- 07) **Building a website is a long-term process.** Make your first site small but very good. As soon as it is finished take a break to consider and plan the next stage. Don't rush and fall into the trap of making erratic and poorly thought out changes. It will show up in the functionality of the site.
- 08) **Use the website to support and reflect everything you are doing in your business.** Give people a reason to keep coming back to visit and the contacts will grow.
- 09) **Work with someone you can trust.** Someone who communicates clearly and keeps their time agreements.
- 10) **Over time your website becomes your shop-front to the world** if done well and with patience. Building a great site that brings in customers requires the same elements as producing an audio, video, text or magazine publication. At Class One Productions we specialise in the creation of highly interactive websites that create a response. Do not let your site go stale.

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Your final product is a reflection of the image you wish to
present to your audience.

Cutting corners will end up costing you more in the long run.

We invite you to take advantage of the Class One Productions
expertise in all of these areas.

Please call us on 02 9437 4199 and talk to Paul Buckingham.

We will make sure you sound and look good.

Created by Paul Buckingham, Class One Productions.

Need more information about this style or
any other style of production?

Please contact Paul on 02) 9437 4199

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Class One Productions creates powerful products for powerful people with empowering results!