

# A-Z

Whether you're looking to introduce a video learning library in your organisation or want some tips on producing your own films, here's an A-Z of everything video learning, from the award-winning production team at Video Arts.

OF  
**VIDEO FOR LEARNING**

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## A IS FOR AUDIENCE

**Don't misread them.** Many L&D managers have died metaphorical deaths from not thinking about how their audience would react to their video.

Are there any defining characteristics of your audience (age, job function, location...) that should influence how you deliver your message?

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## B IS FOR BEHAVIOUR

You can't change someone's personality, but you can help them think differently about the impact of their behaviour. Video allows complex ideas about human behaviour to be put across in a short space of time in a way that your learners are more likely to remember and apply back in the workplace.

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## C IS FOR CREDIBILITY

**Don't blag it.** Know your subject; or make sure someone else does. Think about the learning points you're trying to get across and find a subject matter expert to validate them. But, remember a subject matter expert's job is to know the subject; they're not always the best person to write engaging dialogue.

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## D IS FOR DISTRIBUTION

Once you've got your videos how will you get them out to your learners? It's worth asking yourself: Are the videos compatible with your existing LMS or would you prefer a dedicated video platform? How are you going to track and measure learner engagement with the content? Where will the video be hosted and how easy is it to access? What video player will you use and does it bring the benefits of technology like adaptive streaming for a smoother playback experience?

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## E IS FOR EDITING

Avoid amateur techniques in your editing; if your company wouldn't use a ripple dissolve or honeycomb transition in PowerPoint, then don't use one in your film. Use a straight cut (no transition at all) between shots in the same scene, or a fade-to-black to show either the passing of time or the end of a video.



## F IS FOR FRAMING

The better your kit, the better your film will look. However, you can get a decent result with a camera phone and a tripod if you follow a few key tips; and one of them is framing. Too much space around your subject will look awkward and unprofessional – for a mid-shot keep the top of their head close to the top of the frame. Creatively you might want to have someone to one side, for example, in an interview having someone off-centre talking towards the unused space can be effective.

## G IS FOR GRAPHICS

Just because you can make your titles morph into the face of your CEO and back again, it doesn't mean you should.

That said graphics are great for conveying technical or compliance-type learning, so it's worth considering whether your content might be suited to a motion graphics approach.



## H IS FOR HA HA

Have you heard the one about the L&D manager and the funny video? At Video Arts humour is important to us – we're always banging on about it because it's a fact that you can't learn anything if you're asleep. Use humour to keep your learners entertained, engaged and awake! As long as the learning messages are clear and the humour is relevant then people will have a better chance of remembering, and applying, what they've learned.

## I IS FOR INTEREST

Employees are normal people and can be easily distracted... oh look a rainbow!

Apparently the attention spans of our learners are decreasing. Maybe they are (if this was a 2,500-word article instead of a list would you have read this far?) or maybe they're just bored. Your videos need to get a message across quickly and maintain attention.



## J IS FOR JUST-IN-TIME

Video is the perfect learning format for delivering swift, concise learning at the point of need. By taking a couple of minutes to watch a video a manager can feel prepared to face the situation ahead of them; whether it's a tricky presentation or difficult performance review.



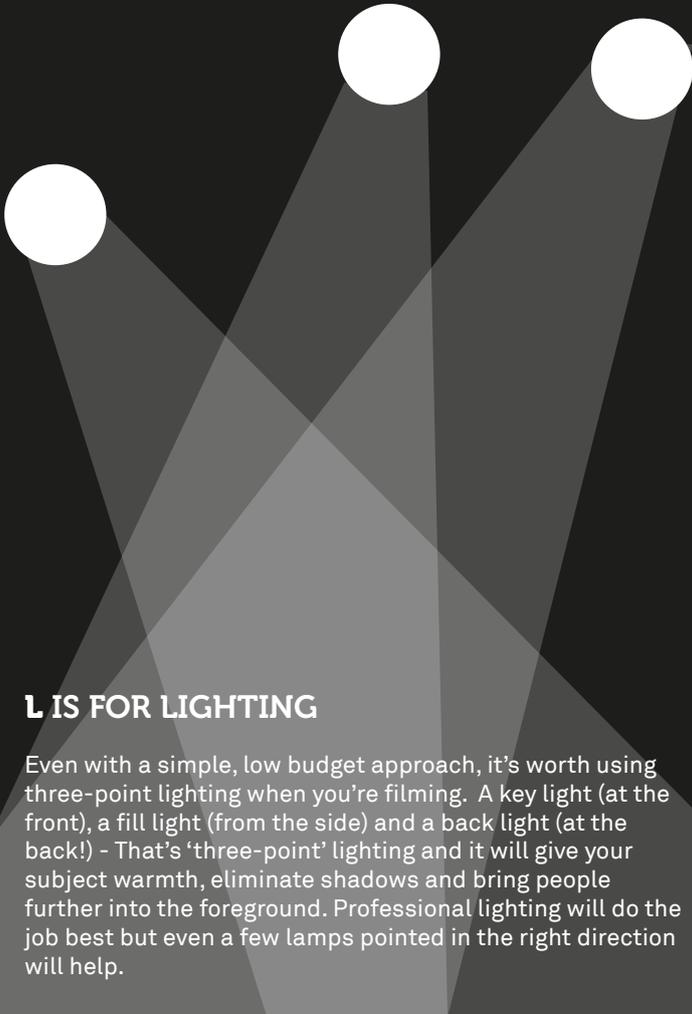
## K IS FOR KUDOS

Whether you are licensing content or making it yourself, a good brief to start with is 'what awards has it won, or will it win?' If your content is good enough to win at the Cannes Corporate Media awards, for example, then you know you're on track to producing something that's effective; and that you can be proud of.



## L IS FOR LIGHTING

Even with a simple, low budget approach, it's worth using three-point lighting when you're filming. A key light (at the front), a fill light (from the side) and a back light (at the back!) - That's 'three-point' lighting and it will give your subject warmth, eliminate shadows and bring people further into the foreground. Professional lighting will do the job best but even a few lamps pointed in the right direction will help.



## M IS FOR MONEY

You don't need a pile to get started. You can license off- the-shelf content for a few pounds per learner or make your own simple Vox Pops with minimal kit and a keen amateur editor. That said, think of your favourite US TV drama and you can bet the production costs are upwards of four million pounds per episode...which gives you an idea of the scale of a big broadcast production.



## N IS FOR NOTHING NEW

A good film tells a compelling story – and there's nothing new about storytelling. Tell a story that feels authentic, let the viewer identify with the characters and you're on the road to a successful learning journey.



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## O IS FOR OBJECTIVES

Don't set 'Making a Video' as your objective. Creating a film is not an end goal in itself so start by thinking about what you need to achieve. Specifically, use the advertisers adage; **what do you want people to think, feel or do differently as a result of watching your film?**

## Q IS FOR QUICK

Tom Hanks might be able to keep our attention for 120 minutes by himself on screen, but can you? Even if you need to present lots of content, break it down into short snappy clips (two minutes as a rough guide) to keep the attention of your learners. Your videos should cut to the chase and get to the learning point quickly.

A graphic featuring a large red letter 'Q' with a white outline, a white sneaker with a red stripe, and a black shoe, all set against a red background with motion lines.

## S IS FOR SOUND

People will forgive a low quality image and hand-held camera work - if the content warrants it - but if the audio isn't clear or loud enough they will give up on your video very quickly. Sound engineering is one of the most important parts of film production. Even if you need to do it on the cheap, avoid using the microphone in your mobile phone which is omnidirectional and tends to pick up a lot of background noise - use a directional mic.

## P IS FOR PATHOS

You can't just ask people to change their behaviour - to be successful; they have to believe in it. And that's where pathos comes in. If you can appeal to people emotionally, present the learner with a situation - response - consequence, then the learner has something to reflect on to change their behaviour, and their reactions to other peoples' behaviour, in the future. That reflective process is absolutely vital. As the designer and online learning commentator Stephen Downes says "10,000 hours of practice may produce expertise, but 10,000 hours of unreflective practice produces nothing but sore shoulders".

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## R IS FOR RELEVANCE

Your video learning has to directly relate to the needs, problems or personal goals of the learners - relevance helps to drive out any reluctance to learning and encourages learners to return and explore other content. A good starting point is to look for content that you can match to the key competencies that you ask of employees.

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## T IS FOR TALENT

Performing in front of a camera is not easy. **Do not recruit employees as actors in a scripted drama.** (Are we being clear enough?!) If a video is to engage people emotionally, learners have to identify with the characters and their story. They have to get caught up in the narrative and the challenges being faced and, for that, you need skilled professional actors. By all means use real employees in your videos but keep it authentic with real-life interviews. Don't script them - people who aren't used to performing in front of the camera will come across as wooden. Let their natural voice shine.

# U

## U IS FOR USABILITY

Whatever platform you're presenting your videos on, is it a hassle-free experience? Your platform should have a user-friendly interface which lets employees easily find what they're looking for, and what other people think of it.

## W is for writing

*Anyone can learn how to build a basic storyboard and it will help you structure your story and signpost your learning points by defining a sequence of shots. Not everyone can learn to write scripts or act well and both of these are essential if you're planning on any kind of dramatic approach to your video.*

*A good script, well-acted will engage your audience. Clunky dialogue plus bad acting is how car crash video happens.*

## V IS FOR VICARIOUS

Video gives people a chance to experience events second-hand, so they can see the impact of their behaviour in a light-hearted way, without feeling embarrassed or put on the spot. By showing a scenario that portrays a character (a made up one – not Sandra in Accounts) with the same issues, individuals can drop their emotional guard and admit to themselves that they too need to change.

This is especially useful for first time managers and leaders, who may have progressed to their role by virtue of their technical competency rather than their people management skills. That's why (according to the initial findings from our 2016 Learning Index) Leadership and Management top the list of learning that L&D managers want to use video for in the upcoming year.

## X IS FOR X-GENERATION

Whether you're dealing with the so-called cynicism of Generation X or the high workplace expectations of Generation Y (also known as the Millennials) you've got a good chance of getting your message to learners with video.

According to PwC, 2016 is the tipping point when Millennials (those born 1981 to 1999) will make up 80 percent of the workforce. These digital natives have been brought up on a diet of video and mobile technology; and that needs to be reflected in the learning programmes you deliver.

# Y

## IS FOR YOUTUBE

**L&D professionals are more likely to buy-in content than find it for free on YouTube** (source: Video Arts Learning Index research 2015) and the reason is two-fold:

1) Relevance - once you've directed people to YouTube it's easy for them to get distracted by dancing cats, and 2) Reliability – you need to be sure that the messages are valid and based on good pedagogy, not just entertaining clickbait.

The message from the learning community is clear – YouTube if you want to, but be wary of the downside. If you do want to use YouTube links maybe consider a platform where you can embed links but keep your learners within a branded environment.

## Z IS FOR ZOMBIE

**Don't create zombie learners.** We have developed habits for how we assess and consume digital content so answer five simple questions to keep your learners awake and engaged:

1. How many other people have watched it?
2. What did they think of it?
3. Do the pictures and description make me want to click 'play'?
4. How long will it take me to watch?
5. Will it be worth it?

# Z

