

Knowing Your Audience

How The Audience Shapes The Story You Capture

Before you film, know who will watch the video. Your audience shapes every decision you make – how long the video should be, how much context to build, what emotional register to aim for, and what the learner needs to say for the story to land. Different audiences have different needs, different levels of familiarity with your work, and different reasons for watching.

The Core Question

Who is watching, and why do they care? A funder watching a 90-second video at an annual general meeting already believes in your mission – they want evidence. A stranger scrolling Instagram knows nothing about your program – they need to feel something in the first three seconds. A community member at a gala wants to be moved and proud. These are different asks.

Audience At A Glance

Audience	Target Length	Platform/Context	What They Need	Best Framework
General public	30–60 seconds	Instagram, Facebook, TikTok	To feel something in the first few seconds. No prior knowledge of your program. Hook immediately – context comes later or not at all.	Moment + Meaning
Annual general meeting	60–90 seconds	Projected at AGM	Evidence of impact from a real person. They know your mission; they want to see it in action. One clear story, told simply.	Story Spine (condensed) or Before / Now / Next



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Donors and funders	90 sec – 2 min	Funder presentation, grant report, email campaign	Confidence that their investment produced real change. They want specificity – a real person, a real outcome, not a general statement.	Story Spine (full)
Members and community	90 sec – 2 min	Newsletter, website, community event	Connection and pride. They may know your program or be potential learners themselves. Accessibility of language matters.	Before / Now / Next or Story Spine
Special events and galas	2–3 minutes	Played at fundraising or recognition events	To be moved. The room is primed for emotion. You can take more time – but every minute still needs to earn its place. End on hope, not just impact.	Story Spine (full) + And Then / So What

General Public - Social Media

Who they are	Strangers. They did not seek out your organization. They are scrolling. You have two or three seconds.
What they know	Nothing about your program – possibly nothing about adult literacy or the challenges your learners face.
What makes them stop	A face. A specific sentence. Something surprising or emotionally real. Not a program name, not a statistic, not a logo.



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Length	30–60 seconds maximum. Instagram Reels, TikTok, Facebook short video. Portrait orientation (9:16).
What to capture	One moment. One honest sentence from the learner. Start in the middle of the story – the moment itself, not the context. Context is the caption or the editing, not the opening line.
What to avoid	Opening with your organization's name or mission statement. Starting with context ('Maria came to our program in...') – that is for longer formats. Anything that requires prior knowledge to understand.
Tone	Personal, direct, warm. The learner should feel like they are speaking to a single viewer, not presenting to an audience.

Annual General Meeting

Who they are	Members, board, long-term supporters, and funders. They already believe in your mission. They are there to see the year's work reflected back.
What they know	Your program – its name, its purpose, its history. They do not need to be convinced; they need to be reminded why it matters.
What they want	Evidence that the work is real. One person, one story, told clearly. They want to feel the investment was worth it – not see a summary of outputs.
Length	60–90 seconds. Played projected in a room. Landscape orientation (16:9).
What to capture	A clear arc – before, turning point, what changed. Enough specificity that it feels like a real person, not a composite. The learner can reference the program by name here – that context is welcome.
What to avoid	Lengthy context-setting before the story begins. Multiple learners in one video. Statistics as the emotional climax – data supports the story, it does not replace it.
Tone	Warm, proud, grounded. The room wants to feel good about the year. End on impact and forward momentum.



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Donors, Funders, and Grant Reporting

Who they are	People who gave money and want to know it produced something real. They may be individual donors, foundation staff, or government funders. They are often reading or watching alongside a report.
What they know	Your program's mandate – but they may not know your community well. They understand program language but respond to human stories.
What they want	Specificity. A real person, a named outcome, a sense of lasting change. They want to feel confident that the investment was well used – and that they could justify it to someone else.
Length	90 seconds to 2 minutes. Embedded in a report, emailed as a link, or played in a presentation. Landscape (16:9).
What to capture	A fuller story arc. Can include what the program specifically provided – a tutor, a class, a credential – as long as it stays in the learner's voice. End with what is different now and what comes next.
What to avoid	Vague language ('her life changed'). Closing with a program appeal or donation ask inside the story itself. Letting the practitioner's narration replace the learner's voice.
Tone	Credible, warm, specific. Funders want to trust you. A real story with honest, unpolished moments is more persuasive than a produced one.

Special Events and Galas

Who they are	A mixed room – donors, community members, staff, board, sometimes learners themselves. The event is designed for connection and generosity.
What they know	Varies widely. Some know your work deeply; others are new. The video may be their first real encounter with a learner's story.
What they want	To feel something and to be proud. The room is already primed – the video is the emotional centre of the evening. It earns the ask that follows.
Length	2–3 minutes. This is the most generous length you will be given. Do not fill it with context – use it to let the story breathe.



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What to capture	The fullest version of the story. A richer before, a more complete telling of the turning point, and genuine reflection on lasting impact. The learner can speak at more length. Silence and pauses are powerful here – do not edit them all out.
What to avoid	Using the extra time for program information, statistics, or staff testimonials. Ending on the program rather than on the learner. Overproducing – a simple, honest video plays better in a room than a slick one.
Tone	Generous, hopeful, human. The learner should feel like the most important person in the room – because in that moment, they are.

One Story, Multiple Audiences

You do not need a separate video for every audience. A well-captured 10-minute interview can be edited into a 30-second social media clip, a 90-second AGM video, and a 2-minute funder version – all from the same footage. Capture generously. Edit intentionally. The audience determines the cut, not the story.

Before You Film: Audience Planning Questions

Answer these before the pre-conversation with the learner. The answers shape which framework you choose, how you guide the interview, and what you are listening for.

Who is the primary audience for this video?	
What do they already know about our program?	
What do we want them to feel?	
What do we want them to do after watching?	



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Where will the video be shown or shared?	
What is the target length for this audience?	
What framework fits best for this length and audience?	
Is there a secondary audience we should consider? (e.g. social media recut)	

Looking Ahead — Session 3

In Storytelling Part 3: Making the Video, you will learn how to set up your phone for a good recording, how to conduct an interview that feels like a conversation, and how to make simple edits to turn a longer interview into a short, shareable video. Bring your audience planning notes, your chosen framework, and a charged phone.

