

The First **20 Seconds**

How To Structure Your Videos
for Thought Leadership



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First Impressions

They say you never get a second chance to make a first impression. That goes double for video, where getting the attention of strangers is even more challenging. So if you lose it in the first 20 seconds, it's awfully hard to get it back. In fact, it's usually impossible.

So let's not let that happen to you. Study this brief guide, follow these instructions to the letter, and I guarantee your retention will be an order of magnitude higher than it would have been had you been flying blind.

Before They Click "Play"

One very cool thing about video is that it's like a box of chocolates. You never know what's inside. Let's keep that in mind as we walk through this process.

The First Objective

Your viewer doesn't know what to expect at this point. She chose to watch your video because of the way it was positioned in an email, a blog, an article, a social media posting, a suggested video on YouTube, or a recommendation from a friend.

That positioning led her to believe that you might have an answer to a problem that's been driving her crazy. So she's willing to give you a few seconds of her precious time. But even before she hits play, it's likely she's paying as much attention to her cup of coffee as she is to your video.

What she's hoping down deep inside is that you're about to delight and surprise her, so much so that she'll set her coffee down and lean forward. That's what we all hope in these situations.

But her expectations are also pretty low. She's seen countless online videos and most of them are pretty wretched.

That's your advantage. So let's not squander it!

Think of these first critical seconds as you would a rocket on the launchpad firing up its engines. Will it fly? Will it blow up? That's the feeling you want to give your viewer. Something important is about to happen here. It could be great or

it could a disaster about to unfold. Either way, we've got to stay and see what happens!

Here's how you create that feeling...

The Opening Moment must have two qualities:

1. It must defy the expectations of your market.
2. It must conform to the expectations of your market.

Hey, what is this "sound of one hand clapping" stuff? I know. It's sounds crazy. But hold on. This is more useful than you think.

Here's how to reconcile the unreconcilable and so delight your viewer.

Resolving the Opposites

Human beings live in the grip of a duality-based universe. Black and white, up and down, hot and cold; you get it, right? But what happens when someone comes along and shows you how to lift yourself out of the prison of duality? What happens when you can show the fish that it's swimming in water?

Surprise, delight and enlightenment. That's what. Would that be enough to get and keep the attention of your viewer? Of course it would! So let's see how a coach, consultant or service provider can do that in the simplest possible way, without any fancy camera tricks or special effects.

The Scripting Approach

The fastest and easiest way to do this is with your script. You first acknowledge the problem, then talk about the usual way people handle the problem, then dismiss the usual solution.

Starting with the problem is basic to grabbing attention because it's human nature to be attracted to problems first. Even while entering the paradise of an all-inclusive beach resort, we're already looking for the sharp rocks, iguanas and aggressive vendors. It's only when we see no sign of any of those that we allow ourselves the luxury of walking down to the clothing-optional beach.

But I digress.

The point is that you must start with the problem to gain your viewer's attention. But how do you do that in a video?

Part 1 - The First 5 Seconds

This first moment is all about the problem. You've got to get to the point when you use a script-based opening like this. You have no more than 5 seconds for that viewer to decide if this is her problem, too. So make it very specific and very clear and do it fast. Don't worry if the problem seems even too specific to you. If it's clear and focused, she'll come back for more later. If it's fuzzy and broad, she won't pay attention.

So instead of saying something like "Hi folks! Today I want to talk about the scourge of obesity and how to lose weight", which is very broad indeed and completely useless for gaining attention, you would narrow your topic down.

For example, "Have you ever wondered why your waistline goes down so slowly even when you're losing weight?"

Now, as a viewer, I'm thinking about something that's always bothered me, but that I've maybe never given voice to.

And as the person who wrote this, you conformed to the expectations of your market by simply standing and talking about a familiar topic. But you've also broken the paradigm by shining a light into the darkness of your viewer's lower level of awareness, which completely defies the expectation of that same low awareness she brought to the video.

Now, she might have expressed it as "I hope I learn something", but these are guarded words. We learn things all the time. But 99% of the time we don't apply it, so the learning doesn't last. In asking the question as you will, you've not only shined a light into darkness, you've prepared the ground for true learning. When the light has its way, learning happens automatically.

That's the key to using a script-based approach.

This is what the best videos do. They don't give you new information. They express your viewer's deepest unexpressed fears, giving words to what, until now, have only been half-formed ideas. And because your viewer doesn't own those words yet, when someone comes along who can express them to her, she

feels drawn to you in a way she can't describe in words other than astonishment, relief, enlightenment and gratitude.

The usual problem with this script-based approach is that it's hard to come up with these sorts of provocative questions, so given time constraints and a general inability to focus on the problem, many coaches either give up or go too broad with the problem, undercutting everything that comes after.

So I would encourage you to spend as much time as this incredibly important moment deserves. If you get it right, your message will explode with relevance in your market. It will be shared, torn apart, explained, analyzed and copied.

And isn't that a relatively decent way to position yourself as an authority?

Part 2 - The Next 5 Seconds

Our viewer has now put down her cup of coffee. She's intensely curious, which is to say her desire to know more is at a relatively high level. So let's not keep her waiting.

We follow our statement of the problem with the "conventional wisdom", but we don't stay with it too long, because our viewer is all too aware of the conventional wisdom and doesn't need us to explain it to her. So just position the idea as a way that causes most people to fail.

Does that make you nervous? Good! No authority becomes an authority without taking the risk of sticking his or neck above the crowd.

So maybe it goes something like this: "The experts say this is because you have to speed up your metabolism. But the science says otherwise."

I think that was 5 seconds. anyway, you get the point. It's a two part statement. The first part "The experts say you have to speed up your metabolism..." is your statement of the conventional wisdom. The second part, "But the science says otherwise", is knocking it down.

Summary of the first 10 seconds

So let's look at the first 10 seconds of our script-based video.

“Have you ever wondered why your waistline goes down so slowly even when you’re losing weight? The experts say this is because you have to speed up your metabolism. But the science says otherwise.”

Simple, clear, focused and provocative. But notice that it does one more thing. The phrase “But the science says otherwise” is not just a refutation. It’s also a bridge into the next section.

The Bridge

We have our viewer’s attention now, but we also need a bridge into the next section. “But the science says otherwise” is our bridge because it hooks our viewer all over again with a brand new concept. In this case, the concept is that there’s new information coming that she wasn’t aware of before.

Part 3 - The Next 10 Seconds

Right now our viewer is engaged emotionally. And if we stayed there for the whole video, she’d be exhausted long before we’re done and we’d lose her attention.

So right now we’re going to tickle the left brain with some hard facts. This does 2 things at once. It shifts our viewer from the right brain to the left brain. This in itself requires attention for her to pull off, so there’s no danger of losing her.

It also gives that suspicious logical brain something to chew on while the emotional side is still engaged. It’s a cool double whammy and continues to position you as an authority expert.

So it might go something like this:

“According to the latest study published in the New England Journal of Medicine, 67% of severely obese patients lost over 6 inches on their waistlines in only 6 months when they added this one thing to their daily routine”.

OK, that was more like 13 seconds, but you get the idea. And I hope you noticed something else. There is another bridge at the end of this statement that will buy us rather a lot of time to do some more teaching. As much as 2 more minutes with no more fancy structures in place.

Script Summary

Here's the entire 20 second opening...

"Have you ever wondered why your waistline goes down so slowly even when you're losing weight? The experts say this is because you have to speed up your metabolism. But the science says otherwise.

According to the latest study published in the New England Journal of Medicine, 67% of severely obese patients lost over 6 inches on their waistlines in only 6 months when they added this one thing to their daily routine".

Script Template

Here's an handy template (words in parentheses are alternate ways to say the same thing) for you to fill in the blanks for your market...

Have you ever wondered why (noticed that) _____, even though (when) _____?

Experts say _____ because they believe (want you to believe) that _____.

But the science (facts, truth) says otherwise (shows us that's not quite true, show us the opposite is true).

According to [reputable source] [startling statistic] actually produced the desired result when this one thing (idea, nutrient, concept, action, activity) was added to their day (routine, diet).

Summary of the Technique

The first 20 seconds of a video are key to positioning you as an authority. When you do it right, you engage your viewer in a way that delights and enlightens.

1. The first 5 seconds succinctly express a problem that has been driving your viewer crazy, but they that haven't been able to solve, mostly because they can't express it clearly to themselves.
2. The second 5 seconds destroy conventional wisdom by taking a stand against it.
3. The next 10 seconds engage the logical brain with a startling statistic that sets up the rest of the content and makes your viewer receptive to the rest of your video.

What's Next?

The first 20 seconds of a video are vitally important to its outcome. But there's more to the story. The reason video is being employed determines what comes next.

So...if those first 20 seconds are most likely to be written as above, the next step is to finish writing that video according to a plan that makes it sing with clarity.

I have a simple set of instructions that will help you finish the script you started above. That video will now build fascination for what you do, and attract people who now know they can't get your "secret sauce" anywhere else.

Just click below to get this new resource free of charge, with no fine print.

[The Consult Video Scripting Formula](#)

Blue Skies and Tailwinds,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steven'.

Steven Washer
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