

Shooting stars

How to produce online video that rivals the pros and puts your business in its best light

For selling online, nothing beats video. According to comScore, professionally produced online video increases consumer preference for a product by nearly 25 percent. The key words here are “professionally produced.” All too often, companies produce lackluster videos with bad lighting, poor sound and monotonous delivery, then wonder why consumers run to higher-quality content. The reason is simple: Consumers connect better videos with better products.

The good news is that it's not as hard to craft top-notch videos for your website or promotional campaigns as you might think. With a small investment and some basic know-how, you can create a valuable tool for your sales arsenal that captures an audience and, with luck, convinces them to buy. Here's what you'll need. —Logan Kugler



CAMERA

The **Canon EOS 5D Mark II** (\$2,199) is an SLR camera that has become the benchmark for shooting high-quality full HD video on the go. Pair it with a zoom lens from Canon's L series or rent a Zeiss Compact Prime CP.2 lens from BorrowLenses.com (\$105 for three days).



TELEPROMPTER

Unless you're a world-class speaker, don't wing it. Polish a script and put it on an iPad using **Prompter People's Flex Series iPad Teleprompter** (\$899) and the company's iCue app.



LIGHTS

The secret sauce to a professional look is **Smith-Victor's K71 3-Light Soft Box Kit** (\$1,530), which comes with an essential hair light and the boom to hold it.



AUDIO

Don't mess around with sound; go for crystal-clear audio and easy setup with the king of wireless microphones, the **Sennheiser G3 100 Series Wireless Lavalier Mic** (\$630).



TRIPOD

The **ManfrottoMVT-502AM with 701HDV Pro Fluid Video Mini Head** (\$350 for the set) is solidly built yet lightweight (just over 4 pounds); the head allows for easy, precise adjustments.



PRO TIPS

- Use a zoom lens and position the teleprompter 10 to 12 feet away. If it's too close, viewers will see your eyes moving side to side as you read.
- Keep your backdrop simple, or pick a memorable yet visually calm location.
- For editing purposes, Apple's iMovie does the job. Don't have a Mac? Find someone who does and borrow it. (Seriously—it's the only way to go.)