

Editing a Low-Budget, Kick-Ass Fundraising Trailer

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Who is your **audience**?

- family and friends
- foundations
- donors versus investors, or both (hybrid models)
- you – the filmmaker – help to find your story

What is the **medium**?

- Web – recommend flash, BUT make a quicktime also for iPhone. Youtube does both automatically.
- DVD
- Projecting – party, or in theater for bigger donors
- Work in highest format you will need and downconvert to the others.

What's the ideal **length**?

- between 1 and 4 minutes (be able to watch it at work without getting caught!)

What should the trailer **say**?

- As close as possible to the “coming soon” trailer – as if the film is already done.
- Where it might differ from is to emphasize the reason you are making the film
- Usually sets up the characters and the situation/problem, and reveals the flavor of the conflict and drama in the rest of the film without giving too much away. Piquing interest is key!
- Show style and tone of film
- Summary: What is the film about, what will it look like and why should I (the donor) care?

How do you make a trailer **before your doc is finished**?

- Need to find your story (Can be 10-20% of total editing time)!
- Usually make trailer after shooting a good fraction of footage – story often changes as you go. More challenging to make trailer earlier on, but still possible and useful.
- Think of creative ways of replacing footage not shot yet: e.g. Use voice over from audio interview, still images ...

How do you make a trailer **before your narrative film is finished**?

- Option 1: Shoot a scene or scenes.
- Advantages: clear idea of story, style
- Disadvantages: cost, time to cast actors twice, build sets etc.
- Option 2: Do something visual that is not the movie itself. More like a “making of” movie. Can include some storyboards, or even photos with actors.
- Advantages: much cheaper, don't have to go through e.g, casting twice.
- Disadvantages: less clear what style of film will be.
- Option 3: Make a short film that is similar in style and content, or even part of the longer film, or a prequel involving the same characters.

Stylistic aspects:

- Music can really help
- Montage can give idea of **conflict** and **drama** without giving too much away.
- Fades to and from black – clichéd, but can work well.

The Details:

- Use a real editing program, e.g. Final Cut Express for \$200. iMovie has issues with broll, etc.
- Do at least a basic sound leveling – voice peaks around –12 dB, up front music similar, background music lower, universe-ending explosion 0 dB
- Do basic color correction – white levels and black levels, mid levels, saturation.

Summary:

- Doesn't have to be perfect! Your final film can be perfect. Any visual representation of your film is so much better than just talking about it

Trailers shown in class:

District 9: http://www.apple.com/trailers/sony_pictures/district9/

D Tour: <http://dtourmovie.com/>

The 5:10 To Cooperstown: <http://www.farleyfilm.com/>

Immersion: <http://www.immersionfilm.com/>, click on “why this topic?”

Alive in Joburg: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=le3y0QILjJE>

Mojados – Through the Night: <http://www.mojadosmovie.com/>