Pre-Production Guide

Captivate

- **Hook viewers in the first 5 seconds** to drive attention before the skip
- **Surprise** in opening scenes with stunning, delightful, unexpected or memorable imagery
- **Human focus** on hero characters: their emotions, reactions, and personalities

- **Break the 4th Wall** to connect with audience directly
- **Use enticing language**—e.g. “Guess what?”; “Can you believe [x]?”
- **Fast pacing & tight framing**—2+ shots in the first 5 seconds work best

Leverage Audio Early

- **Attract with audio**, 95% of YouTube videos have sound on
- **Use VO or on-screen talent audio early**
- **Augment the experience** through environmental sounds/SFX/foley to add an extra level of professional polish

Make It Pop on Mobile

- **Select set design, wardrobe & props** to create color contrast between each other
- **Plan for tight shots** of talent and product
- **Ensure set, product, and talent are well lit**—especially night scenes; remember most views will appear on dim 5in. screens

Brand with Intention

- **Shoot product/service in use** to integrate the brand naturally into your story
- **Capture talent while mentioning the brand audibly** for additional repetition
- **Brand colors & identity** can inform props, set, and wardrobe

Account for Flexibility

- **Schedule time to capture extra footage**
  - Behind the scenes
  - Unscripted moments
  - Different ‘Calls-to-Action’
- **Capture a variety of close-ups of characters and products** to enable creative A/B testing on YouTube

Compel Viewers to Take Action

- **Capture takes of talent demonstrating how to take action**. E.g. if the goal is to drive online purchases on external site, include footage of talent visiting the site
- **Capture talent/VO telling the viewer what to do next**, e.g. Learn more; Order now
- **To drive clicks**, capture talent/VO saying “Hit the blue button to [Your Call-To-Action].” This brings users’ attention to the clickable blue button below the video
## On-Set Guide

### Director & Producer

Capture viewers attention in the first 5 seconds, or risk losing them forever.

- **Surprise** in opening scenes with stunning, delightful, unexpected or memorable imagery
- **Human focus** right from the beginning to get the viewer’s attention and connect
- **Integrate product/brand naturally,** with purpose in the scene & story
- **Record audio mentions of product / brand** —ideally capture with on-screen talent (vs. VO)

- **Break the 4th wall** to address and connect directly with the audience
- **Capture additional footage/ b-roll/close ups** of talent, product, and set to allow for alt cuts, cutdowns, blooper, or BTS videos

**IF THE OBJECTIVE IS TO DRIVE ACTION:**
- **Talent articulates ‘Call-to-Action’** Bonus: Get take of talent saying “Hit the blue button to [CTA, e.g. ‘learn more’]” to leverage this shot with YouTube’s interactive engagement feature which is a clickable blue button located below/next to the video

### Camera & Light

Optimize for small screen viewing experience.

- **Get tightly-framed shots** of your subject, especially humans to read their emotions
- **Set up (color) contrast** between the subject and background
- **Ensure overall imagery and especially your subject is well lit/exposed**
- **Frame & block** with YouTube elements & larger supers in mind

**Recomm. Encoding Output**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>MP4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audio codec:</td>
<td>AAC-LC (96 or 48khz)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video codec:</td>
<td>H.264 (no interlacing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frame rate:</td>
<td>Standard or High (up to 60 fps)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bitrate:</td>
<td>35-45 Mbps for 4K 30 SDR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8 Mbps for 1080p 30 SDR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspect Ratio:</td>
<td>16:9 - vertical and square possible, player adapts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Set & Costume

Make it pop with bright & contrasting colors!

- **Use wardrobe to create color contrast** between subjects and sets / background
- **Choose colors** in costumes and set design that are **associated with the brand**

### YOUTUBE ELEMENTS

- **SAFE AREA**
- **Visit advertiser**
- **BUY NOW**
- **Skip ad**
Post-Production Guide

Edit for the Platform

- **Construct with audio in mind.** 95% of YouTube videos have sound on; ask yourself, how can audio help capture more viewer attention.
- **Use VO or on-screen talent audio early.** Get the most out of your talent, consider if adding VO might enhance the narrative you’re building.
- **Augment the experience** through environmental sounds/SFX/foley to add an extra level of professional polish.

**Follow Emerging vs Traditional Story Arc**

- **Brand Cues**
- **Start High**
- **Build**
- **Unexpected Shifts**
- **Multiple Peaks**
- **Offer**
- **Branding**
- **More story for those who want it**

**Brand & Action**

- **Feature product in use & audibly** in the first 5 seconds and integrate the brand naturally into your story.
- **Include a logo** at all times if goal is to increase awareness or recall.
- **Add specific Call-to-Action** at the end to drive more clicks/actions.

**Helpful Tools**

- **Test your video**—load a rough cut on a mobile device or use the Preview tool in Google Ads to see how your ad will look as it appears on YouTube, in full screen, desktop, or mobile formats.
- **Inspiration**—check out the Think with Google for inspiration for YouTube that are pushing the boundaries.

**Try Experimenting with Formats**

Lean into popular content formats on YouTube:

- **Listicle**
- **Music Video**
- **Explainer**
- **Challenges**
- **Commentary**
- **Reaction**
- **Interview**
- **Narrative**

**MASTER TIP:** Create multiple versions, strengthening supers to pair messaging to specific audience (if in scope). Talk to Creative Works to understand the audience.