

# SATELLITE BROADCAST TALENT

## TIP SHEET

by

*Scott V. Fedale, Chair, John Francis, Former Senior TV Producer-Director; and  
Drexel Rhoades, Information Specialist-Video, Information Department,  
Washington State University, Pullman, Washington*

### **Can I Use My Slides and Overheads?**

#### **TU Graphics Primer**

#### **Using Videotape or Film**

#### **Using Notes and Outlines**

#### **How Will Questions be Handled?**

#### **Preparing for Your TV Appearance?**

#### **Dressing and Make-Up Tips**

#### **Where Do I Look When I'm On Camera?**

#### **General**

Television sees things differently than the human eye. Therefore, visuals which appear fine to your eye may not look the same on television. As an example, television does not handle extremes in contrast very well.

We will work with you to create or adapt visuals for the television medium. In most cases, if you have text you want to display on the screen, we will recreate this in our studio with a character generator—a sort of video typewriter. We will choose a color scheme, font, and type size appropriate for television. However, if you want to create your own, please read the next section (TV Graphics Primer) and follow the guidelines we've provided.

If you want to create charts, diagrams, or original artwork for use in your broadcast, our production staff will work with you to produce these materials.

One other conversation we will have with you is about the need for using visuals and the amount of information on the screen at any one time. You know your content, we know television and how to use the medium. By working together we can do the best job of producing visuals that enhance the delivery of your information.

## TU Graphics Primer

Slides you may have already prepared may not work well because the text lines are too long or the letters too small. Text must be large and easy to read. A rule of thumb is no more than 40 characters in a line and no more than 8 lines to a screen. Less is better.

It is better to let our television production personnel retype your text into our video character generator. You may find you need to shorten your text, or reword it to split it into two screens, one after the other. This is particularly true of tables.

However, if you want to use your slides, show them to one of our TV producers who will tell you if they will be acceptable on video.

## Overhead camera for text

If you need to use text on paper so you can write on-the-air or do calculations for the viewers to follow, you can do so and use our studio's overhead camera. You'll be able to see the picture made by the camera on a small monitor in front of you when you're on the set.

To prepare visuals for use by the overhead camera, confine your print to a 6" x 4.5" area in the center of a horizontal page of typing paper. Use Helvetica bold font, 36 points or larger. Center the text both horizontally and vertically (a template for text preparation is attached to this document). Use pastel colored paper; white tends to glare on camera.

## Overheads

Normal overheads used on an overhead projector are almost always unusable on video. Usually the print is too small and the ink lines too thin. The information on overheads usually needs to be rewritten and adapted to a character generator. This may mean considerable revision for large tables and lists.

## Diagrams, graphs, charts

These can sometimes be created on our video character generator or with one of our video graphic machines. Otherwise, they can be output as slides from a computer and then used in a TV slide projector which inputs them to video for use in the broadcast. We have capability to output from either IBM or Macintosh computers, but check with our producers about which graphics programs we can handle on our system.

The same general rules apply to print size. Make print quite large and easy to read, using Helvetica or a similar non-serif font. Use yellow or white letters and diagram lines and use a medium to darkish background. Make sure graph or chart lines are thick enough to see easily.

Remember that a slide is wider than a TV screen (a slide has a 5x3 ratio, a TV screen 4x3), so anything close to the left or right sides will be cut off. Give yourself "safe areas" around all four edges; use only about the center half of a slide's total area.

## Photographs

Use slides, not prints. Prints don't look good on video and need to be mounted on a card in front of a camera. If you need to use a print, make a slide of it.

Because slides are longer than a TV screen, the parts of an image close to the sides will be cut off. Usually a small amount at the top and bottom is cut off too, because TV requires a "safe" zone. Video really only uses the center 50 or 60 percent of a slide's area, which makes many slides unsatisfactory on video. If you are shooting slides specifically for video, frame the picture loosely, leaving lots of room around the edges.

TV is a low-definition medium. Small details that show up in a slide get lost on TV. For example, use a close-up of a person, not a distant shot.

Avoid slides that have very bright or very dark areas, because TV does not handle high contrast well. A slide or photo can be scanned into a computer, altered (e.g., contrast reduced), and then re-output as a more satisfactory slide. Slides should be in horizontal format, not vertical.

## Using Videotape or Film

If you want to produce an original videotape sequence, we will work with you to determine how best to produce this sequence and how it will be integrated into the broadcast

It is possible to use pre-produced videotape sequences as part of your broadcast. However, we will judge these materials as to their quality and suitability for use in the broadcast and advise you of our opinion. If you have some videotape you want to use, let us know as soon as possible so we can preview it for visual and aural quality.

If you want to use a film or part of one, this will have to be transferred to videotape before it can be used in your broadcast.

In order for us to use a film or videotape, or part of either, that has been produced by someone else, you will have to obtain written permission to use these materials and re-broadcast them. In most cases this will simply involve getting clearance from the producing organization or individual. With copyrighted materials, however, you may have to pay to use the materials in your broadcast. We will not use any copyrighted materials in our production, either videotape, film, pictures, etc., for which we do not have written clearance for broadcast use.

## Using Notes and Outlines

We realize that most of you will feel more confident if you can have some notes or an outline of your presentation with you on the set of the broadcast.

This is fine but we urge you to resist writing out each of your answers or your entire presentation and attempting to read it. The result will be a very unnatural looking presentation which is visually uncomfortable for your audience to watch and listen to. The result of your spending lots of time looking at or reading from your notes on the air is the impression that you really don't know your material very well and this can damage your credibility with your audience.

## How Will Questions Be Handled?

We offer a variety of options for your audience to pose questions to the guests. Viewers can fax their questions if you'd like to provide that option. Another one is to have questions phoned into our operators in the studio who will write them down and pass them on to the program host. Finally, viewers can choose to go on the air live with their phoned-in questions. You will be informed which methods will be used during the show in which you are taking part.

If you are answering a question sent or phoned in by a viewer, you should once again look at the host while answering, since the host will be handling the task of reading questions that have been sent in or telling viewers on the phone lines to go ahead and ask their questions.

## Preparing for Your TV Appearance

The best preparation for appearing on a broadcast is to simply know your material and be yourself. Our producer, director, host, and crew are there to make you look as professional as possible and together the result will be a highly professional broadcast.

## Dressing and Make-Up Tips

- Avoid color extremes. Do not wear a white or black shirt or blouse. Dark navy or dark green will look like black and ivory or light cream will come across as white.
- Wear pastels. Blues, greens, or beiges work best.
- Avoid large areas of red or orange in your TV attire. TV has a hard time handling reds, oranges, and magentas and they appear as “noisy” sections in the television image.
- Avoid small, intense patterns, such as herringbones, houndstooth checks, or small stripes. Larger patterns are fine.
- Avoid shiny jewelry, such as pins, big, shiny tie clasps, etc. This will reflect studio lights and distract viewer attention from you and what you are saying.
- Try to wear something that has a lapel, an open collar, or buttons up the front so a clip-on microphone can be easily attached. For men, your shirt, tie or the lapel of your sport coat will work fine. For women, a blouse with buttons or a jacket with lapels work nicely. Avoid wearing a turtleneck or crew neck sweater since these force the microphone to be placed almost directly underneath your chin, which does not provide the best sound pick-up. A v-neck or buttondown sweater works much better.
- For women, wear some make-up, even if you don't normally wear any. Some base make-up or foundation will eliminate any shiny spots on your skin that could be exaggerated by the television lights.
- For men who have a receding hairline or who are partially or totally bald, the television crew will usually apply some sort of make-up or spray to eliminate any potential glare caused by television lights.
- If you are not sure if the outfit you plan on wearing will work well on television, bring an extra outfit with you.

- Be prepared to be seen in your entirety. In wide shots, your feet and legs may be seen, even if you're sitting behind a table. Be sure to ask our producer what the seating arrangement will be on the set. This will insure that you know if you'll be sitting in a chair with nothing in front of you or behind a table with a long tablecloth draped over the front of the table.

## Where Do I Look When I'm On Camera?

In most instances you will not be presenting to the camera but rather, will be interacting with the host of the show.

In this case, all you need to worry about is looking at the host while you're talking, in much the same way as you would look at anyone while you're carrying on a conversation.

At different times during a production, different cameras will be getting shots of you, depending on whether the director wants a wide shot or a close-up. Therefore, you need not worry at all about the cameras but simply look at the host or at another guest who might be talking.

If you are in a situation where you are asked to "present to the camera," the director will work with you to be sure you know which camera to look at and when.

## General

Always try to arrive early. We will always give you a time by which we'd like you to show up at the studio but if you arrive earlier than that it will give you more time to get accustomed to the studio environment, give us time to check your wardrobe and make-up, etc.

For almost every production we will want to have a rehearsal. This will enable you to get a feel for how the show will flow, what your graphics will look like, how the host will interact with you and the other guests on the set, etc. The rehearsal is like any other rehearsal, i.e., it's a chance to practice for the real thing. If you have any questions about anything during the rehearsal, please ask your host or producer.

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION  
Washington State University



## College of Agriculture and Home Economics

*WSU Cooperative Extension bulletins contain material written and produced for public distribution. You may reprint written material, provided you do not use it to endorse a commercial product. Alternate formats of our educational materials are available upon request for persons with disabilities.*

*Please contact the Information Department,  
College of Agriculture and Home Economics,  
Washington State University for more information.*

*You may order copies of this and other publications from the WSU  
Bulletin office, 1-800-723-1763, or online <http://caheinfo.wsu.edu>*

*Issued by Washington State University Cooperative Extension and the U.S.  
Department of Agriculture in furtherance of the Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914.*

*Cooperative Extension programs and policies are consistent with federal and  
state laws and regulations on nondiscrimination regarding race, color,  
gender, national origin, religion, age, disability, and sexual orientation.*

*Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local  
Cooperative Extension office. Trade names have been used to simplify  
information; no endorsement is intended.*

*Published February 1995. X 990*

*C0999*