



63 - Working From Home Now? How To Make Your Webcam Videos Look Professional with Ryan Spanger

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Brief Background About Ryan Spanger

- ❖ Ryan is the founder of the Melbourne based video production dreamengine.com.au.
- ❖ Dream Engine makes corporate, training, web and event videos for businesses, government departments, and educational institutions.
- ❖ Dream Engine was established in 2001 with one simple aim: to make excellent videos that drive the right results for their clients.

Why Making Your Video Look Professional Matters

- ❖ If your videos look good, or if you look good on webcams and on your zoom calls, of course, it's going to make you look more professional, and more in control.
- ❖ It's also more flattering and we all want to look good, we want to come across well, so it's the equivalent of really just dressing and grooming yourself well, and making a good impression.

Get A Dedicated Camera and Work on Lighting

- ❖ Get a dedicated web camera which is going to look better, it will be sharper, it will look more flattering because they have some kind of clever stuff inside the camera, which actually just makes things look better.
- ❖ When you're sitting in your new home office, if possible, try to set up your desk so that you're facing a window so you can make the most of natural light.
- ❖ The key is that you want the light to look nice and soft. So if it can be filtered, it can come through some kind of blinds, if it's not, you know, coming through the window directly onto you and looking really bright and strange.
- ❖ And then the other thing that you could do is a supplement that with some, you could get some cheap LED lights, you know, which can look quite flattering. And just add a nice soft sort of look.

Audio is Crucial

- ❖ Even if the picture is great, if you can't hear properly, people are just going to click away. So the audio is actually the most important thing. And the classic error that people make is to use the built-in microphone.
- ❖ So if you can use an external microphone, something like a podcast microphone, if you're in the office is awesome.

Framing and Using the Rule of Thirds

❖ Rule of Thirds

- So you know, if you look at portraiture, photos or paintings, they always frame people up in the same way.
- If you divide the frame up into thirds, so horizontal line at the top, third, and horizontal line at the bottom third, you'll notice from looking at portraiture, that people's eyes always appear at the top third, which is just it just looks more flattering, and it looks more normal. It's the best way to frame things up.
- ❖ The classic error that people still often make is to put their head too low in the frame, so leave heaps of space above.
- ❖ Generally, if you're making like a face to camera video, generally you put yourself in the middle of the frame.

Composition

- ❖ Basically means the arrangements of everything in the frame.
- ❖ Because when you first get started with making your own videos, there's a tendency to just focus on who's appearing there and not think too much about the background.
- ❖ It's good to have something in the background that's coherent with what you're talking about, and what it says about you. You want to make the background look interesting, but not so interesting that it's going to distract from the person that's actually talking.
- ❖ Have something personal as well. You know, it's nice to have something a little bit unique, you could have some of your brandings in there as well. You know, try to make it look interesting.

Height of Your Camera

- ❖ This era where people either have the camera too high or too low. So if it's about a webcam, often people have a big screen these days, and they've got the webcam up the top, and it's really looking down on them.
- ❖ Where the cameras are placed creates a psychological impression. And classically, if the camera is too high, it can psychologically diminish the authority of the person that they are filming.
- ❖ On the other hand, if the cameras are too low, then that can look strange as well and also quite unflattering. You want to have the camera at eye level or just slightly higher. If you're using the webcam on your laptop, and you can, you know, put your camera, put your laptop on a few books to raise it up. If you're using a tripod, then you can easily adjust that.

Classic Errors

- ❖ When you make your videos, watch them back and in a kind way, you know, critique them to yourself and think about what did I do really well?
- ❖ What are some elements that I can improve? The first thing you'll notice is habits and tendencies that you have that you probably weren't even aware of.
- ❖ The other thing you'll start to notice is the technical visual side to do with lighting or sound and slowly but surely, you know, improve them.
- ❖ Take note of the "Eyeline" and it's about looking directly into the camera. So, I've noticed that happens a lot when people are doing phone videos because they're actually watching themselves on the phone rather than looking at the camera, and it's something that I do as well.