

Nonprofit Communications Tool Kit

The old saying goes, *“a picture is worth a thousand words”*. Moving video is comprised of 30 individual pictures per second, along with sound. Hence, television is a very powerful and effective medium for communicating messages. But TV and video production can also be very costly to create. Nonprofit organizations have unique communications needs and challenges, and marketing budgets are usually low on the list of priorities. Community television provides tools that can help with these challenges.

What is community television?

Community (or public access) television is a local media outlet that serves to make everyone’s voice heard in the community. While commercial broadcast stations rely on advertising dollars to offset the costs of creating programs, public access television is a unique, volunteer-based medium. Anyone can be the producer, director, camera operator and editor to create their own television program for the community and the world to see.



AccessVision is the Battle Creek area’s community television facility. As a nonprofit organization, AccessVision understands the needs of nonprofits. When it comes to communications, you may have already discovered that the more you can do yourself, the less money it will cost you. AccessVision provides the tools for you to do it all and put your organization on TV. This includes training, equipment, facilities and air time for locally-produced television programming on cable channels 16 and 17 and simulcast on digital cable channels 916 and 917. AccessVision’s mission is to empower people to strengthen a sense of community, facilitate civic dialogue, and celebrate local culture by communicating through electronic media.

AccessVision reaches potentially 62,000 viewers in the Battle Creek area, including Battle Creek, Springfield, Pennfield, Emmett and Newton Townships. And best of all, there is very little cost involved. Users only pay a small fee to be trained on the equipment, and the rest is **free**. There is no cost to use the equipment and no cost for airtime - a perfect match for non profits on a small budget. If you were to pay for all of the services that AccessVision provides to the community, it adds up to about \$23 million worth of market value, annually.

Whether you need to spread awareness about your organization, recruit and mobilize volunteers or just communicate the services you offer, public access television can be the perfect low-cost solution to effectively get your message out to the community. While AccessVision prohibits any commercial sales endorsements or advertising, it can be an ideal tool for nonprofit fund raising.

What kind of program should I create?

AccessVision offers a wide variety of choices to spread your message. There are no set rules on what form your program can take; your imagination is the limit. You could create any of the following:

- **Monthly talk show - live, call-in, or pre-recorded**
- **Promotional video**
- **Public Service Announcement**
- **Televised coverage of a special meeting or event**

The next page lists the benefits and challenges associated with each format. **No matter which format you choose, the AccessVision staff is ready to assist you along the way.**



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“Having produced a monthly talk show for 15 years, I

can tell you that AccessVision is an invaluable communications tool for nonprofit organizations and the people of Battle Creek. I’m always amazed at who has seen our show.”

- Jim Hettinger,
Retired President & CEO, Battle Creek Unlimited



Program Formats to Choose From

Public Service Announcement (PSA): A short video or "spot" to promote an idea or service, usually 30 or 60 seconds in length.

Benefits

One person alone can produce a PSA, so there's no extra crew required. Short length makes it a good starter project and makes it ideal to put on the internet. It can be cross-purposed to run on AccessVision, cable, broadcast TV and even radio. You can work at your own pace, and polish by editing.

Challenges

Short length = limited content. You only have enough time to get across a small amount of information. You may need to pay for air time on cable, broadcast TV and radio.

Where do I start?

Enroll in these workshops:

- Camcorder
 - Digital Editing
- Develop a script, using existing information/language from other marketing materials.

Promo Video: A short video recorded at several different locations by a single camera. It usually features interviews edited with other scenes.

Benefits

One person can do everything. It's easy to cross-purpose by airing on AccessVision, making a DVD to hand out or present at a meeting, or use inside of a talk show (see below). Short length makes it a good starter project and makes it ideal to put on the internet. You can work at your own pace, and polish by editing.

Challenges

Can be time consuming to shoot and edit a lot of pieces. Getting good interviews is crucial to the video's success.

Where do I start?

Enroll in these workshops:

- Camcorder
 - Digital Editing
- Develop a script, using existing information/language from other marketing materials.

Talk Show: Recorded in the studio with multiple cameras, either live or live-to-tape, featuring a host and one or more guests.

Benefits

Once established, can be an easy format to create a topical, monthly program on a regular basis. Each episode can feature a different topic/guest expert relating to issues that a non-profit organization serves. Minimal time investment: one shoot, recorded live = very little to no editing. At the end of the studio recording, the show is done.

Challenges

Requires a crew of 2-5 people to operate cameras & equipment (in addition to anyone in front of the cameras). Must align guests' schedules with crew. No editing = low margin for error. Can be boring without the use of additional footage (B-Roll) or roll-ins (PSAs, promo video).

Where do I start?

- Round up a crew of 4 people and enroll everyone in Studio workshop.
- Additional camera crew can enroll in Studio Camera Volunteer workshop for free.
- Producer/Director should also enroll in Digital Editing workshop.

Televised Event: Cover a meeting or event for those who cannot attend, using either a single camcorder or multi-camera portable studio.

Benefits

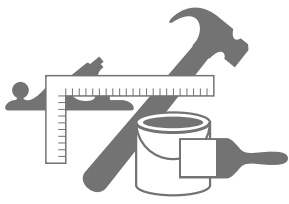
Minimal time investment - one shoot, recorded live to tape = very little editing. At the end of the taping, the show is done. If using portable studio, PowerPoint & video roll-ins can easily be integrated into the program.

Challenges

Setup on location can be laborious. Live event = low margin for error. Can be boring without the use of additional footage ("B-roll") or roll-ins (PSAs, promo video).

Where do I start?

- If possible, round up a crew of several people and enroll everyone in Camcorder and Portable Studio workshops.
- Producer/Director should also enroll in Digital Editing workshop.



Additional Options

Even though AccessVision provides all the tools you need to produce your own video, you may also consider these options, all of which include using public access television as a communications outlet for your message.

✓ Use the Bulletin Board to make an announcement: Slides consisting of text and still images are run in between programs on AccessVision's channels. These could be announcements, contact information, or promotion for an upcoming event. This is a good option for a timely message that needs to get out quickly, without a lot of work. It's easy to re-purpose press releases for this. However, slides are not as effective as video, and the information presented is limited to the "5 W's": **Who? What? Where? When? Why?** You can e-mail the information to bulletinboard@accessvision.tv, or fax a hard copy to **(269) 968-2924**.

✓ Localize a national video and air it: If your agency already has a video, you may bring it to AccessVision and schedule it to air. This will require minimal time & effort; all that's required is AccessVision's disclaimer, and for you to fill out a one-page Program Application. Programs may be submitted on VHS, S-VHS or DVD. However, it's not as localized as a home-made production.

✓ Hire an agency or production house to produce a video for you and air it: You get what you pay for. Full service agencies can provide all aspects of production, including creative development, script writing and talent. But be prepared with an appropriate budget, as these projects can cost as much as \$500 - \$1,000 per finished minute.

✓ Utilize AccessVision's contractual services: AccessVision provides shooting and editing services at \$50/hour, or a \$200 flat rate for a studio taping. This is less than half the cost of production house rates. This option reduces the amount of work required on your end to produce a professional-looking program. Final output is available on DVD and the internet. While it is much cheaper than using a production house, it still requires some budget. Services provided include shooting and editing only; you must provide the creative and script development.

✓ Use your own equipment to make a video and air it: You can use all of your own equipment, or some of your own and some of AccessVision's to produce a video. This is a very flexible option, since it requires little or no AccessVision training. However, it does require equipment and a level of expertise with it. Your equipment may not produce as high a level of quality as that of AccessVision's.

✓ Volunteer to help on someone else's production: The best way to learn is by doing. Volunteering is an excellent way to learn the ropes of producing a show.

Workshops offered by AccessVision

- Camcorder
- Digital Editing
- Final Cut Pro
- Studio
- Studio Camera Volunteer
- Portable Studio

Offered weekly and repeated monthly - \$20 each, per person

The first step in producing a show at AccessVision is to enroll in our workshops that teach you how to use our equipment. You are only required to take the classes necessary for the equipment you intend to use, based on which program format you choose. If you're not sure what that is yet, Camcorder is a good place to start, as it covers all of the basics of shooting video.

Most workshops are two sessions, with each session lasting about two hours. The first session consists of equipment demonstration and techniques. The second session gives you hands-on time to practice using it. You must complete both days to be certified. Advance registration is required, and you can do so in person by paying with cash or a check. If you would prefer to receive an invoice, registration can be handled over the phone. You will need to provide a name, address and phone number for each person enrolling.



"Accessvision has been a great help in getting the Alliance of Women Entrepreneurs' message out. With only a couple of classes, AWE can document their events, and share them with members if they missed a meeting."

- Doug Sturdivant,
volunteer producer



"AccessVision is instrumental in our success of placing the right animals with the right people. As a non-profit, we are limited by our budget, but not by our imagination. AccessVision affords us with the opportunity to reach our goals without emptying our pockets!"

- Calhoun Area Humane Society



Getting The Message Out

You've taken the workshops, practiced using the equipment, and finished producing your first video. Now, what do you do with all your hard work?

Once you've finished a program, you can select up to four times for it to air. There is no cost for air time, and programs are scheduled either as a one-time special or as a series. If you're just getting started, it's best to make one program first, before deciding to commit to a series. Promote your upcoming show by sending out press releases to the **Battle Creek Enquirer** and **Battle Creek Shopper**. Include a photo - you can even use a still frame from your video.

You can also air your program at other access centers in Marshall, Kalamazoo, Grand Rapids or even nation wide. Please be sure to check the other center's requirements for submitting programs, which may differ from those of AccessVision.

There are additional options should you decide to distribute your video outside of cable television. AccessVision can provide you with DVD or VHS copies. We can also help you create video files for uploading on the internet or podcasting. **YouTube** (www.youtube.com) is an easy - and free - way to upload your video for the whole world to see. AccessVision also provides **AccessVision On Demand**, a web-based service that allows viewers to watch select programs online, anytime. And should you want to revisit and update your project in the future, AccessVision can suggest some strategies for archiving your footage.

What Now?

Now is a very exciting time to be involved with technology. Electronics, computers and the internet have made many free and easy tools available for communicating that previously were not, even a just a few years ago. Take advantage of all of the tools and technology AccessVision has to offer and use it to make your organization's voice heard!

Enroll in our production workshops to learn how to use the tools. If you need assistance with the cost of training, you may apply for a mini grant from the **Battle Creek Community Foundation**.

More information available from AccessVision:

- Where to buy equipment, blank tapes & media
- Where to have a video produced for you
- Where to get help staging a meeting or presentation
- Technology resources specifically dedicated to non-profits
- The best Web sites to learn more about video & television production
- Free hosting services on the internet for video, photos, web sites and e-mail
- A list of all local media outlets, including TV, radio and print
- The most popular video editing software

Call **968-3633** to get started. We'll give you a quick tour of the facility, show you samples of the programs listed here and discuss your needs.



Your Voice! Your Community!

Battle Creek Area Community Television

Cable channels 16 & 17 and 916 & 917
70 West Michigan Avenue, Suite 112
Battle Creek, MI 49017

Phone: (269) 968-3633 • Fax: (269) 968-2924

Web site: www.accessvision.tv



Your program will be promoted on:

- AccessVision's Web site: <http://accessvision.tv> (under "Programming")
- Battle Creek Enquirer's daily guide and weekly TV Preview
- TV Guide: online at <http://tvguide.com> (under "TV Listings") and on Battle Creek cable system TV Guide channel.



"Thanks to the expertise of Access-Vision's staff and

the resources they provide, the Chamber has won four national communications awards, two years in a row. AccessVision is essential to our communications plans and we value their partnership."

- Kathleen Mechem,
President & CEO, Battle Creek Area Chamber of Commerce and producer of the two most frequently-watched programs on AccessVision

