

# How To Capture A Captivating CEO Video



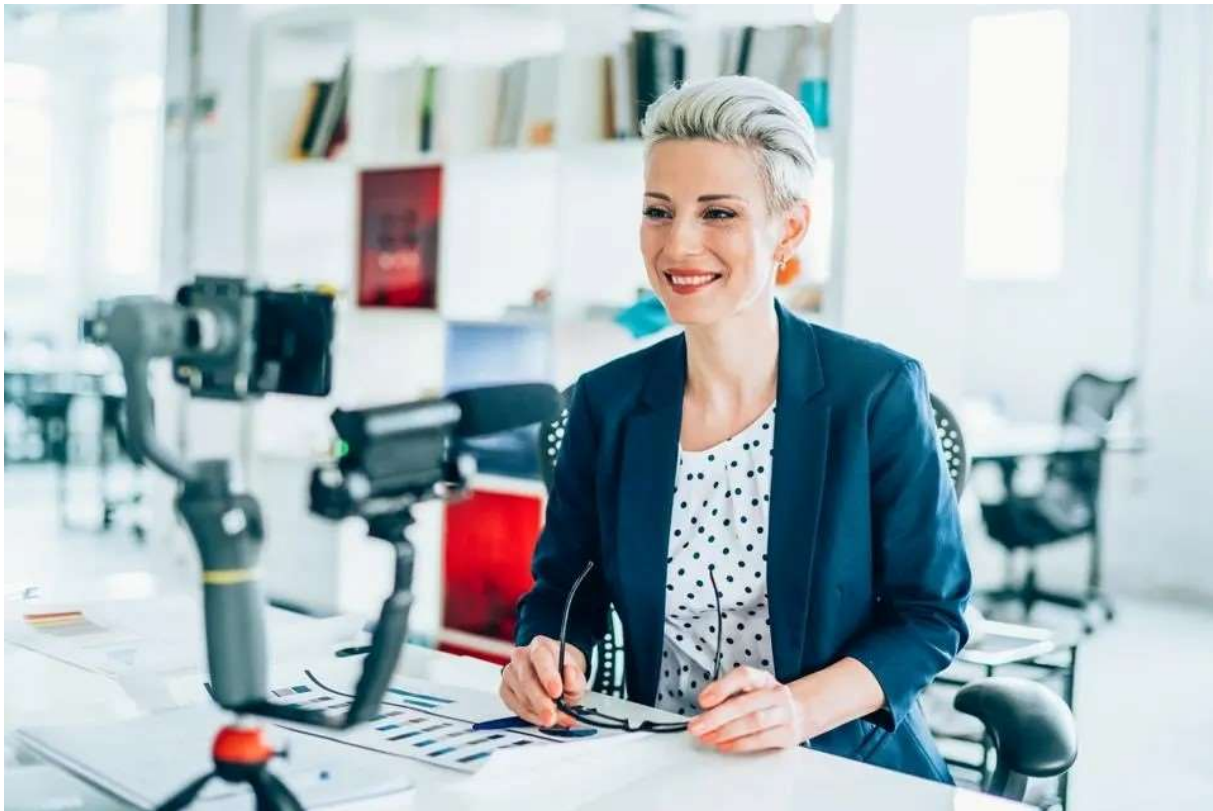
**Susanne Mueller Zantop** Forbes Councils Member

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*Susanne Mueller Zantop, Founder and Chairwoman of [CEO Positions AG](#), enthusiastic about video for positioning and reputation building.*



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Executive video is a crucial aspect of a company's communication strategy and has been [positively correlated](#) with firm market value. According to my company's internal data collected over six years, it is 4.4 times more effective

in terms of earned media than employee video. Moreover, the CEO's influence accounts for as much as 45% of the company's performance, according to McKinsey. That being said, using video to present corporate earnings, talk about corporate social responsibility and enhance employer branding can provide a strategic advantage for those who use it. It can help a company gain credibility, develop a voice and demonstrate leadership externally and internally.

For more than a decade, we have seen more or less spotless, well- or poorly lit videos, where a black-suit-wearing male CEO reads from a teleprompter, presenting the most important figures of the year or quarter. This presentation is sometimes accompanied by licensed corporate music and basic visuals.

However, it is not accidental that CEO videos didn't change for so long: They are arguably more complex. To start with, a CEO is not a trained actor—they are trained to do business, so you should not expect them to have time to learn the script and do everything perfectly within three takes. And the CEO themselves may be sensitive to criticism and want to move on without focusing on top-quality filming. ("You can do that in post-production. Use AI.")

However, the current audience is visually trained on TikTok- and Instagram-style video content. We find that clips can get excellent viewership if they present the CEO in a vertical format and perhaps in casual company-branded clothing. The rise of the format on social media reveals the need for companies to adapt, including in their presentation of financial data.

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## Examples

A very interesting example is Tim Höttges, the CEO of Deutsche Telekom AG. *(Full disclosure: Höttges is a former client of my company.)* He is famous for wearing magenta-colored clothes—one of the key elements of the company's corporate identity.

But this is not the only thing that stands out about [his video](#). How would you, in an annual results video, react to an announcement of a significant drop in a certain figure? At first, you would be puzzled at how cheerfully the CEO speaks about it. But just after that, Tim Höttges would soothe your nerves: He is talking about lower CO2 emissions. This element, called a cliffhanger, is usually present in feature-length movies where you have to make the viewer wait for the story to develop. In a CEO video, it can make the topic feel less boring and more innovative.

Short vertical clips communicate motion and energy. A great example can be found in a [video](#) from Hans Vestberg, CEO of Verizon, who does not bother to present the numbers; in doing so, I believe he motivates the viewer to find them in the annual report. Such entertaining twists in a story are key to keeping an audience that is likely tired of and has seen too many of the classic videos.

These entertaining elements can help ensure that viewers retain more information than they would from a traditional, emotionless presentation. And after watching, you might be interested in taking a closer look at the company.

## **Do You Want To Innovate?**

The safe bet is to hire a team of professionals who specialize in executive video to help you. You are human and so are all of us. Having a specialized content and production team could come in handy when you want to enhance your communication strategy without spending a week on every video. They can also protect you against repercussions that could come from DIYing a financial statement video.

## **What You Can DIY (Especially For Training Purposes)**

### **Start Small**

If your yearly investor relations press release is far from now, try recording a simple vertical-format video on a topic you like and post it on the company intranet. You were going to post it as text anyway, but this way you could gain more attention and try out the new video tools that are available.

### **Be Creative And Structured At The Same Time**

In terms of the video itself, always have the body-voice-content framework (or [7-38-55 rule](#)) in mind. This means that when you appear in front of the camera, your:

- Body should look well-grounded (55% of the message).
- Voice should sound confident and calm (38% of the message).
- Content should correspond to what your audience expects (7% of the message).

You can record yourself a couple of times and take a look at those recordings. This can help you decide how to improve. Of course, there are other aspects

that are not accounted for in this framework, like the camera angle, but ensuring you have everything taken care of in this regard already puts you a step ahead.

### **Practice (Preferably Not Late At Night So You're Not Tired)**

A bit of preparation before you appear in front of a camera can help. Write down some bullet points, do a warm-up for your body and voice and perform a breathing exercise. This can also help with appearances on stage.

### **Use Storytelling And The ACT Principle**

- "A" stands for attention. If the information is not engaging and exciting, then nobody will watch it.
- "C" stands for context. The message should be contextualized and answer the "why" question. Don't prepare a copy of *Moby Dick* to recite.
- "T" stands for trust. Win authenticity by giving your audience proof points. If you want to build trust, you want to tell people why they should trust you.

### **Conclusion**

If you are looking for platforms, begin with Instagram and LinkedIn. In my experience, their algorithms tend to be a little bit nicer toward newcomers to short vertical formats, and you could see a good ROI on your time.

Overall, I, as a strategic communicator and positioning expert, am glad. I am looking forward to what lies ahead and suggest you catch up today to be the driver of innovation tomorrow.

“Money follows the eyeballs.” — Manuel Suarez

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