

# How to get the most out of your music video shoot

**What to expect and things you should know to make your music  
video shoot a smoother ride...**

A guide for artists and bands

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this book to Lawrence Agyakwa and Emmanuel “Kiddie” Osei of Akosombo, Ghana as well as Lady Christine Michaels. Thank you for giving me a chance when no-one else would.

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**This** is NOT a guide on how to make a music video. The intention here is to demystify the process of a shoot for artists and bands, especially the ones who have never done it before.

## Introduction

You hardly slept last night. You were thinking of thousands of fans gathered in front of thousands of screens mesmerized by *you* in your new video. It is a new beginning. Now you really feel like a star.

The morning comes and you have to get up. You feel so anxious you can hardly eat breakfast.

You get a call from the production manager to confirm that everything is fine and to make sure you are fine. The drummer is already parked outside with the rest of the band waiting for you to come out.

And off you go to the location of your first video shoot. Yes!

Shooting a music video besides the obvious promotional benefits has a lot of other advantages. It is a very fun way to bond with your fans (excuse the pun, I couldn't help myself), and trust me, it feels really good to be the centre of attention when everyone is running around to make sure your video happens!

It is my earnest desire to assist you in your preparation for this wonderful day and to help make sure it really is a wonderful day.

This document is written with the assumption you are not shooting the video yourself but because of a low budget you will have a significant input in the production. I am also assuming the video will be shot with a professional attitude in order to achieve superior results.

Directors and crew members may also use this guide as a powerful insight into the music video shoot from the artist and band perspective.

## 1. The shooting process

In other words “Lights, camera, action!”. This section will walk you through the usual filming process from your perspective (sparing you the technical details)

- First you arrive on set all ready to star in the video only to find out you have to wait...
- If you need make up for the camera (even if you’re a guy) and there is a makeup artist, you will get made up.
- If you need to change into a costume you do that.
- The director will come to you and explain in further detail what you will need to do for the next take
- In the meantime lights if any will be set up, the set, necessary will be set up etc. Basically people will be doing things why you impatiently wait to get started
- Finally everyone is ready; you get to your position. The director (or the assistant director) shouts a series of commands. You know you ready to go when you hear “Action!”
- You do what you do best, that is performing until the director says “Cut!”
- If the take was good you move to the next one , else you do it again
- And the process repeats itself until the director gets all the shots he wants then he announces “It’s a wrap”
- Everybody then packs up and goes home.
- If there is more than day necessary to complete the video you do the same as above for the rest the shoot.

After this the video is taken into post-production with which you probably won’t want to bother yourself with, with the possible

exception of editing. The best thing to do though is to trust your director and make changes and corrections after he/she presents the edited video to you.

So that's the simplified music video shoot for you. Sounds like whole lot of fun, doesn't it?

## 2. Your director

I can't overstate the importance of this relationship. You have to be able to have a good relationship with this person (else the shoot is not going to work).

He/she will be responsible for the whole shoot and (on most low budget productions) getting the crew together. Any director who is worthy of shooting your amazing music video must possess the following qualities

- As mentioned above must be able to understand what you expect out of the shoot. He should be able to realistically tell you what is possible and what is not.
- Must be passionate about your song or you/your band or the concept. If he/she is doesn't care about your shoot enough to do whatever it takes (within reason of course) to make it the greatest video ever, you may end up disappointed with both the process and the results.
- Must be passionate about his work. Otherwise he/she is just out to get your money.
- Must be organised and...
- ... must know what he/she is doing. (might seem obvious but you'd be surprised)

Sometime before the shoot, you should go into a preproduction meeting (or a series of those if necessary). It is a very important step, don't skip it. This can actually make or break your video!

During the meeting, besides discussing the concept deeper you will get to know:

- What exactly you will be doing, especially if the concept requires you to do something unusual.
- Your shooting schedule (you shouldn't concern yourself with much beyond where you should be at what time)
- Make decisions on locations, props etc. (very important)
- Possibly get to know whoever else you will be working with

Make sure the director shows you some kind of script and story board. They serve as a blueprint for your music video.

These don't have to be elaborate but if the director says "I don't believe in restricting myself with these things, I am a real artist, I will just express myself!" real art is what you'll get. Experimental art, that is.

If you really prefer completely unpredictable results, disregard the last comment.

Whoever you contract to shoot your video should make it as easy on you as possible. I don't believe in the artist carrying stuff or running around to get things done (at least on the day of the shoot). For best results the artist should be as relaxed (and rested) as possible.

If the budget does not allow for the producer/director to hire an assistant and a runner get one of your or the band mates' friends to do it.

This brings up another important aspect:

### 3. The role of your friends.

If you choose to have them on set make sure:

- Each of them has a specific job to do. Let them understand they have to do their job and just that, except if *expressly* told otherwise. Don't underestimate the amount of concentration that goes into professional shoots. Friends (including boyfriends/girlfriends, husbands and wives) can be a huge distraction.

And the crew will get *really* annoyed if your friends start getting in their way!

- **IMPORTANT:** Your mates have to allow the director to do his/her job. Don't permit them under any circumstances to 'assist' the director with suggestions and comments. You don't let them direct your producer in the recording studio, do you?

Many people suddenly "realise" they have Quentin Tarantino "hidden inside of them" during your video shoot. Yes, you are happy for them but they will need to express their new found talent elsewhere.

- Don't let them bring their friends(and boyfriends/girlfriends)

Basically don't let them do anything you wouldn't let them do in the recording studio.

#### 4. You and the band

As much as we all love Big Pimping (or sex drugs and Rock 'n' Roll as the case may be) it is a good idea to not to arrive on set high and/or drunk.

Your “above the clouds” state will not go down well with the director and crew and will negatively affect your performance.

On the legal side, in many parts of the world you lose your insurance if drugs and/or alcohol are found on set. Of course, the former has much greater implications.

**NOTE:** Drugs of any sort are absolutely **NOT** acceptable on any GUARANTEED VIDEOS™ set.

Make sure you have a good night's sleep before the shoot. This is not the time to go out partying; you can celebrate *after* your video is ready.

Don't start arguing in the middle of the shoot! Settling disputes between band members during the shoot is not the way to go.

Make sure everybody knows what role they will be playing and that they are fine with it.

Turn off your phones and keep them turned off! The best practice is to keep them off throughout the shoot but in the very least make sure your mobile doesn't ring during a take.

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