

## How To Make Money With Special Event Videos

Special event videos are much simpler and a lot less worry than wedding videos. In many cases, you'll only need one camera, one microphone, and little or no editing. You'll charge less, of course, but your profit margin will be higher. You can market this service to any professional person or group - attorneys, salespeople, financial advisors, professional speakers - anyone who must give a talk, presentation or lecture before a group of people. Workshops, meetings, conferences, reunions, all are potential jobs for you.

As with weddings, meet beforehand with the person or persons you will be taping, both to get their permission to tape them, if necessary, and to get a feel for what they specifically want on tape. If all they want is a tape of their speech, then all you'll need is one camera (two if you want a spare in case of problems), one microphone and a tripod. Set your equipment up well ahead of time, to allow for testing. Be sure to have the subject of the tape do a test of part of their speech, so you can be sure the microphone is set right. It's important to have clear sound for event taping.

For panel discussions, meetings and other group events, you'll want to have a camera pointed at every person, or possibly at every two people, as well as one at the whole group. Make sure every person can be picked up by your microphones. When you edit the tapes together, try to have the speaking person on screen as they speak, unless that would mean too many rapid changes, which can be disorienting to the viewer. If taping an interview, the subject of the interview is more important than the interviewer. While it's good to cut in a reaction shot of the interviewer from time to time, keep the focus of your tape on the person being interviewed.

Unless you need to use multiple cameras and heavy editing, you should charge less for event taping than you would for wedding taping. There are a few reasons for this. First, you will spend far less time on an event tape. Second, you have a higher potential for return business. If you do a good job, you have a good chance of being called in again for the next meeting or conference. Finally, there is always the possibility of selling copies of the tape to targeted customers. This can either be done for the subject of the tape, with you getting a cut, or the subject can pay you a license fee for each that he or she sells.

An up-and-coming event to tape is the high school or college class reunion. Offer your services to tape the reunion as a keepsake for those who attended, or those who couldn't attend. If you price your service right, you may be able to work a deal where each attendee would get a copy of the tape as part of their registration fee, with a cut going to you. You'll make less for each tape, but you'll be make up on quantity. You should be able to make \$10 to \$15 per tape just for copying the master onto a blank. Set up your VCRs, start the copying, and grab a good book. Sounds like easy money to me! If you tape a reunion, try to get a class list so you can send a personalized letter and brochure to those who didn't attend. They are a good market for copies of the tape. You will need to work out details with the planning committee of the reunion, as they will

probably want a cut of the profits, which is fair. But, you are entitled to the lion's share, since you did the work.

When taping a reunion, make sure to get a good group shot of the attendees, possibly panning across the group for clear face shots. Be sure to tape any and all speeches, important class members like the valedictorian, class leaders, sports figures, and any class member(s) who have become local or national celebrities. Be sure to get plenty of candid material, too, which can be edited in. You'll want to make sure your skills are good when holding the camera for an event like this.

Other events you may want to consider would be family events, like birthdays, bar/bat mitzvahs, holiday get-togethers, as well as business and school parties, award ceremonies, etc. You'll get these jobs primarily from referrals, which means your marketing expenses for these occasional events will be little or none.

Scan your newspaper periodically for local publicity events like hot air balloon races, boat races or shows, trade shows, scouting events, or other events that appeal to a specialized crowd. Get permission to tape these events, then work out one of these deals:

Sell the tape to the sponsor of the event;

Keep the rights to the tape and give the sponsor a royalty fee for each tape sold.

Also, you could tape a group of similar events and edit them together into a compilation tape that could be sold to targeted customers. There are many potential profit areas in event taping, if you keep your eyes open!