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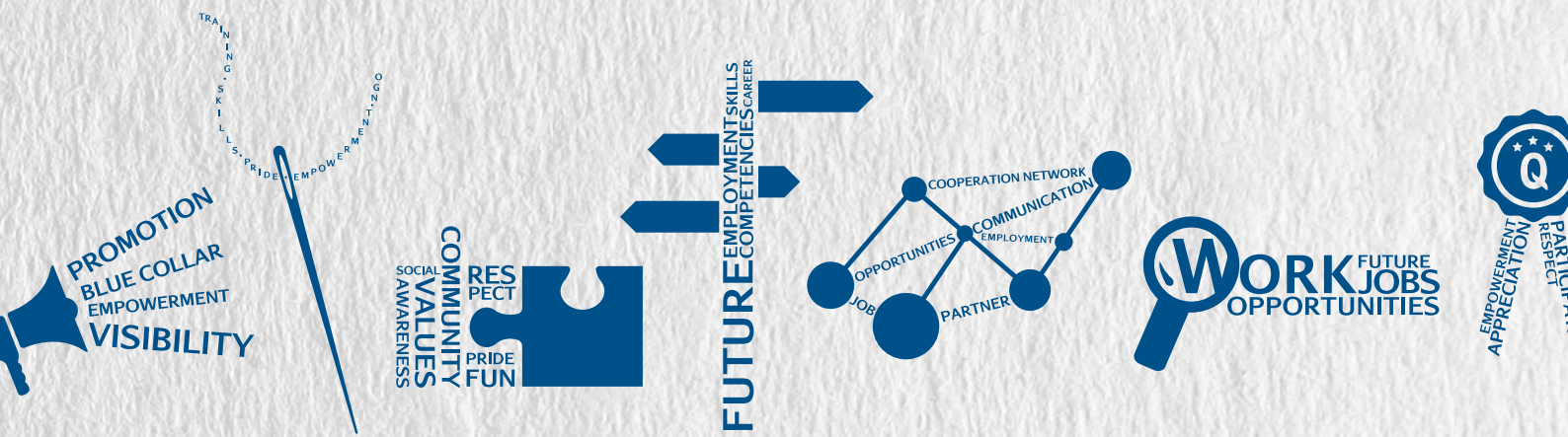
DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

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8.16 HOW TO PRODUCE DOCUMENTARIES AND IMAGE FILMS



HOW TO PRODUCE DOCUMENTARIES AND IMAGE FILMS

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What Is It Useful For

A picture is worth 1000 words and a video is worth 1000 pictures.

Anyone can write testimonials in brochures or on a web page but they are merely words. Put a live testimony or a real success story in a video and the emotion and integrity is immediately apparent. A satisfied beneficiary of the project that comes across on screen as natural and genuine is worth their weight in gold.

A well-made video also sticks in the memory more than a text given that it plays on the emotions of the viewer much more than a solid text.

Creating a documentary about the project's successes is an informative means without obliging the audience to read.

The goal of a documentary is not to develop a fictional story, but essentially to tell a realistic and true story by presenting facts and interviews. It attempts to change or improve society in some way (concerning the perception of TVET). The goal is to bring to light a certain cause with the hope that the film will help galvanise the masses to demand change. It conveys information on the basis of proof and evidence to support it. The documentary structure provides fair chances to communicate this purpose in terms of providing opinions on the topic in question or a specific message concerning the topic, while supporting the claims with proper facts and proofs.

A film can be screened on many different channels (local TV, facebook, YouTube, web-sites etc.). Instead of a regular newsletter a video newsletter could also be an option since film/video is more popular in Palestine for example than written content.



When To Use

Once the project has matured, meaning that there is enough material to place in it and enough "real testimonies and faces" that can talk positively about their experiences. More specifically, the first graduates who found great jobs afterwards, or Meister graduates that climbed the career ladder, or proud parents, satisfied company owners, etc.

- A story – content to explain what you want the audience to understand after watching the film. It is not a written detailed scenario but rather bullet points of what the main messages should be.
- The right production house that is willing to take the job and that understands the message that needs to be delivered. They need to know the project just as much as you do.
- You will find in the annex an example of the contract with the production house as well as the draft of the interview schedule and questions.



Target audience

Videos are meant to be a mass media tool (which is why "YouTube" for example has one of the highest scores among other social media tools). All ages and social classes are attracted to videos.

Meaning a documentary would be great for parents of future students and future students themselves as well as potential training companies.



How Long Does It Take

A few months should be allocated for a documentary to be fully finalised.



What Is Needed

- A budget – both to produce (around 10 000 USD in Lebanon) and to advertise (could reach more than 30 000 USD if it's broadcasted on television – in Lebanon it's 15 minutes for 15 000 USD).
- Live testimonies which are willing to be filmed, could be the successful graduates, the proud parents, the satisfied companies etc. It is also good to add credibility by including an interview with a ministry representative, chambers etc.



Examples

The DSME project has developed a documentary in English and Arabic with subtitles, whereof the short version is uploaded on the project's website and Facebook page: www.dsme-lb.com ; www.facebook.com/dsme.lb www.youtube.com/watch?v=N7DsuoUo984

A printed copy of the full version is also available upon request.



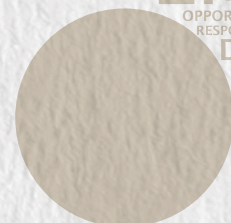
WHAT TO DO

In order to achieve the above mentioned objectives, the following steps should be undertaken:



- Find the “live testimonies” and have them sign on a paper where they accept to be filmed for the film to be used as you want (or the production house will have them sign on the paper – it depends on the production house).
- Decide on a language for the documentary (of course the choice could be more than one language) and consider subtitles.
- Look for a production house according to the above mentioned and to your budget.
- Several meetings should be held with the chosen production house so that they can know your project just as much as you do, and thus translate the idea into a video.
- Make sure all the relevant logos are placed at the end with your contact information.
- Once the documentary is ready, watch it and invite other colleagues and outsiders (e.g. selected people from the target group) to watch it and take their comments.
- Provide a copy to the people who appear in it and have them also comment on it / get their written approval.
- Adapt the comments when necessary – finalise it with the production house.
- Decide on a title.
- Start the distribution and dissemination (see tools 8.17 “How to broadcast documentaries and image films” and 8.18 “How to disseminate documentaries and image films”).
- Upload it on all your communication means (Facebook, website, etc.).
- If the documentary is longer than 7 minutes, work on a shorter version to be placed online and to be used in seminars.
- For GIZ projects/programmes: If you want to upload it in the GIZ YouTube channel, then you need to have a different version (also according to the updated corporate design rules).

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WHAT TO OBSERVE

The following lessons learnt should be observed:

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Pros



- Reaches a large audience.
- Can be easily circulated online.
- It sticks in the memory and it doesn't require extensive concentration to make the target group familiar with your message.
- The people appearing in the video will be the first ones to talk about it and advertise it – this is free promotion.
- The documentary can be cut and scenes from it can be used in some presentations (some schools in Lebanon used some extracts to present the Dual System to potential new students).

Cons



- In relation to the high budget required, the return on investment is not gushing.
- You will be tempted to include all information, yet it is very hard to fit everything within the foreseen time frame that matches the audience's attention span.
- In a country like Lebanon, where Internet is sometimes really slow, people don't have the patience to wait for an 8 minute video to download.

Recommendations



- Choose carefully your "success stories" – they will become part of your branding and they will be the "face to the project" for the documentary's audience. Anything they do in their personal lives affects your project.
- Make sure all the persons in the video agree on the use thereof.
- One of the people interviewed in the video had a wrong title written under their name – the video was already printed when we found that out. Which is why, it is better to circulate it a lot before finalising it.
- It is better to create a YouTube Channel and upload the video there, then link it to your website, so that it doesn't slow down the website.

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