

Some brief tips for a better studio production:

Crew Calls: general rule of thumb. Have crew show up 30 minutes prior to the taping, 45 if they will need some training or review, 60 minutes if the crew the set needs to be put up, 75 minutes for an elaborate set and new crew, 90 minutes for a band.

Have half your crew work a position they have not operated before, or are less comfortable with. Training and practice is the only way to get better, and a well trained crew provides flexibility when you're short on people.

Don't limit your ideas or the program's scope until you talk with out staff. You'd be surprised what is possible and what tricks we can do to pull off your vision.

Gels can enhance a set and splash color on your talent when used properly. Watch TV and you'll see more often than not musicians bathed in light. Remember, white balance first, then place the gels on; otherwise the WB will adjust for the colors and counteract it.

Bring your family and friends to watch the taping. Once they catch the action you just may have some new crew in the future.

Be the ringmaster of our camera carnival. We'll train you step by step to be a director, and it really isn't as hard as it appears. It's such an adrenaline rush, as well!

AND MORE...

A lot of the programs I catch on our channel I like; subjective content aside, we put out some really good shows that are creative in their style or approach. But then I see those shows that don't go the extra step, don't put in that proverbial 10% more effort that would polish their show. The secret to good video? It's all about adding the extras, baby!

For Studio Shows: Use a hand-held camera 4 for a different feel to a performance, or change the set, lights, or clothing at a break. Bring in graphics from your home PC. Don't settle for a graphic as a show opener- go shoot some appropriate footage with a camcorder, tape the set going up, put a camera in the control room for that "hey-audience, we're live!" feel (a la Dateline NBC), or just shoot the show and edit some highlights into an opener you can splice in. Avoid the 2-chairs-and-a-desk talk show set by using stools, the sofa, sitting on blocks, trying the Chromakey wall...just get funky and see what results.

What else...check your backlights, hide the mic cable on your talent by running it through their clothing, rehearse the opening into your show, plan how to end it in case your talent is too long or too short for the program. Pack the background with details that visually describe or reinforce your subject matter. Add color, video always needs more color.