



# Beacon's Community–Trust Short–Form Video Scripting Framework

Plug-and-play script templates for nonprofits, NGOs,  
and government communicators



THE  
**BEACON**

DESIGN  
COLLECTIVE  
INC.



# 100 minutes

the average daily time spent on  
video-heavy platforms

# 2x

more trust built by authentic video  
vs. high-production ads

# 87%

of video marketers report  
increased website traffic



# 52%

authentic content is 52% more likely to be shared than polished brand content

# 68%

of consumers prefer videos under one minute

# #1

short-form video delivers the highest ROI of any content format in 2026 (HubSpot)

# Contents

|                                     |          |
|-------------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Why short-form video matters</b> | <b>5</b> |
|-------------------------------------|----------|

|                                                      |          |
|------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Ask yourself these questions before scripting</b> | <b>6</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------|----------|

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Who is this video for?       | 7 |
| Where should the video live? | 9 |

- Facebook
- Watch
- Instagram Reels
- LinkedIn
- YouTube Shorts
- TikTok

|                                              |           |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>What’s the single goal of your video?</b> | <b>16</b> |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------|

- Build trust and emotional connection
- Drive newsletter signups or material downloads (soft leads)
- Drive event registrations or campaign participation
- Educate and build sector authority
- Expand reach to a new audience

|                                                                 |           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Is the video accessible to everyone who needs to see it?</b> | <b>22</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|

|                                                          |           |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>What an effective trust-building video looks like</b> | <b>26</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------|

|                                 |    |
|---------------------------------|----|
| The principles                  | 26 |
| The structure                   | 27 |
| 5 ready-to-use script templates | 28 |

- Impact story
- Behind-the-scenes
- Campaign announcement
- Educational stop-the-scroll
- Wildcard: Trend-jacking

|                            |           |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Tools and resources</b> | <b>49</b> |
|----------------------------|-----------|

|                                                   |    |
|---------------------------------------------------|----|
| Free and low-cost editing tools for non-designers | 50 |
| Pre-publish checklist before you post             | 51 |

# Why short-form video matters

People don't trust faceless bureaucracies: they trust people they can look in the eye. For nonprofits, NGOs, and government agencies, short-form video is no longer a "nice to have", it's now the fastest way to humanize your organization, prove your impact, and reach the communities you serve.

You may think that budget or equipment are barriers to entry; in fact, the real challenge is figuring out where to start and what the content should be.

This framework eliminates that barrier with ready-to-use script templates tailored for mission-driven communicators.

You don't need a full professional videographer team, all you need is a smartphone and a story worth telling.





**Ask yourself these  
questions before scripting**



## Who is this video for?

This is the most overlooked question yet the most consequential. **A video made for “everyone” reaches no one.** To ensure engagement, you should picture a specific person sitting on their phone, mid-scroll. Who are they? What’s going on in their life right now? What do they already believe about your organization—or not believe? Think they know, or don’t know? The more precisely you can answer this, the more directly your script can speak to them. To set yourself up for success, start by creating detailed audience personas if you don’t already have them. Once established, these profiles serve as an essential guide, providing the foundation and opportunity to empathize that are fundamental to building engaging content.

If you have multiple audience personas, determine the common thread(s), then write your script to satisfy those. In Beacon’s case, the target audience members are time-poor, mission-driven, and deeply skeptical of anything that feels like marketing. They’ll watch 45 seconds of a real person sharing a real outcome but they’ll scroll past a polished announcement in three seconds. So remember, your script needs to speak directly to the viewer’s daily reality, rather than just broadcasting your organization’s internal talking points.

For example, below is an audience persona we created to support us in audience engagement and what that means for how we should communicate with them.





## The Program Manager

Female

Late 30s

\$75K income

Bachelor's of Social Work

Master's of Social Sciences

She manages a government department and wants the programs she's built to actually reach the people they were designed to serve. She's data-driven and empathetic, but operates under institutional constraints—brand guidelines, approvals, bureaucratic communication norms—that can make her feel creatively stuck. She's persuasive internally and genuinely invested in community impact.

### What keeps her up at night

She fears the public doesn't understand her department's purpose or the value of its programs. She's frustrated that government communications often feel generic, cold, or invisible, and that she can't always make the content she knows would actually work.

### What stops her scroll

- Content that's professional enough to clear institutional review, but human enough to feel real
- Plain language explaining a complex government service in a way that doesn't talk down to anyone
- A real community member, not an actor, explaining how a program changed something for them
- Formats that are clearly adaptable to her context without starting from scratch

### Script implication

Provide structure that feels trustworthy and professional, with room for the human element. She needs scripts she can defend to her director (clear, purposeful, accessible) while still being engaging to a general public audience. The Educational and Behind-the-Scenes templates work especially well for her.

## Where should the video live?

Each media platform is like a different room with different furniture, different lighting, and different guests. A video that feels perfectly at home on LinkedIn will feel stiff and out of place on TikTok, and vice versa. Before you write a single word, decide which room you're walking into, because that determines your tone, length, format, and even what you wear.

Here's a breakdown of the major platforms that your organization should consider adopting, depending on where your target audience spends their time, your goals, and your team's internal capacity.





# Facebook Watch



Best for impact stories, campaign announcements, behind-the-scenes, community updates. Ideal for reaching existing supporters and donor audiences.

**Nurture trust with people who already know you.**

## Who's there

- Primary audience: 35–65+.
- The largest and most demographically broad platform. Baby Boomers are highly active (88% usage).
- Nonprofit, NGO, and government audiences—including donors, longtime supporters, community members, and policy stakeholders—live here.
- Nonprofits see 3x higher donation conversion rates on Facebook vs. other platforms.

## Tone and format

- Warmer, community-oriented, longer captions are welcome.
- Autoplay is silent, therefore inclusion of captions is non-negotiable.
- Square (1:1) or vertical (9:16) performs best.
- 60–90 seconds is the sweet spot.
- Albums and photo content still perform strongly here (3.0% engagement for nonprofits).
- Video should feel personal, not broadcast.



# Instagram Reels

Best for awareness content, behind-the-scenes moments, educational stop-the-scroll, short impact clips. Ideal for reaching younger donors, volunteers, and community members. Pairs well with Instagram carousels for deeper storytelling.

**Expanding reach to younger mission-aligned audiences.**

## Who's there

- Primary audience: 18–44, skewing Gen Z, millennials and younger Gen X.
- 139 million Reels are watched every minute.
- Strong with purpose-driven audiences, younger donors, volunteers, and cause advocates.
- Instagram usage grew 13% year on year (YoY) in 2025 and is the fastest-growing platform for nonprofit carousels (5.5% engagement).

## Tone and format

- Visually driven, aesthetic-aware, punchy.
- Vertical 9:16 only. Under 60 seconds performs best.
- The first frame must be visually compelling. On-screen text overlays and captions are essential. Music or trending audio increases discoverability.
- Tone can be slightly more creative and expressive than Facebook.





# LinkedIn

Best for behind-the-scenes of organizational strategy, policy explainers, impact case studies, roundtable previews, team spotlights. Ideal for building credibility with funders, partners, government contacts, and sector peers.

**B2B trust-building, funder relationships, and professional authority.**

## Who's there

- Primary audience: 25–55, professional.
- The fastest-growing platform alongside TikTok (14% YoY growth in 2025). Comments are up 37% YoY.
- This is where the audiences professionally live—as do the funders, grant officers, government partners, and sector peers your clients want to reach.

## Tone and format

- Professional but increasingly personal and honest.
- Square (1:1) or vertical (4:5) performs best. 45–75 seconds ideal.
- Captions in the text post matter as much as the video. LinkedIn is a reading platform that also watches video.
- Thought leadership tone, but the most engaging posts share real stakes, real failures, and real humanity, not press releases. Photos still get strong engagement (3.4% for nonprofits).



# YouTube Shorts



Best for educational explainers, policy breakdowns, program introductions. Ideal for evergreen content that keeps working for you months after posting.

**Long-term discoverability and educating a broad public audience.**

## Who's there

- Primary audience: ALL ages.
- YouTube has the broadest reach of any platform (93% of 18–29, 94% of 30–49, 86% of 50–64, 65% of 65+). Baby Boomers are the fastest-growing segment on YouTube Shorts specifically.
- It functions as both a search engine and a video platform, meaning content is discoverable long after it's posted.

## Tone and format

- Slightly more informational, search-optimized.
- Vertical 9:16, under 60 seconds.
- Titles and descriptions are indexed by Google, therefore use keywords that match what your audience would actually search.
- Shorts feed into your longer YouTube content, so they work especially well as a gateway to in-depth organizational stories.



# TikTok

Best for Trend-jacking content (i.e. capitalizing on a viral meme, trending audio, or popular format to share your own message), awareness campaigns targeting younger audiences, recruitment of volunteers or program participants under 35.

**Long-term discoverability and educating a broad public audience.**

## Who's there

- Primary audience: 18–34 (35.3% are 25–34; 30.7% are 18–24).
- Fastest-growing platform at 17% YoY. 2 billion monthly active users globally. Highest engagement rate for nonprofits at 2.15% weekly follower growth.
- This means new accounts can be discovered here faster than anywhere else.
- However, it skews young and is highly trend-driven.

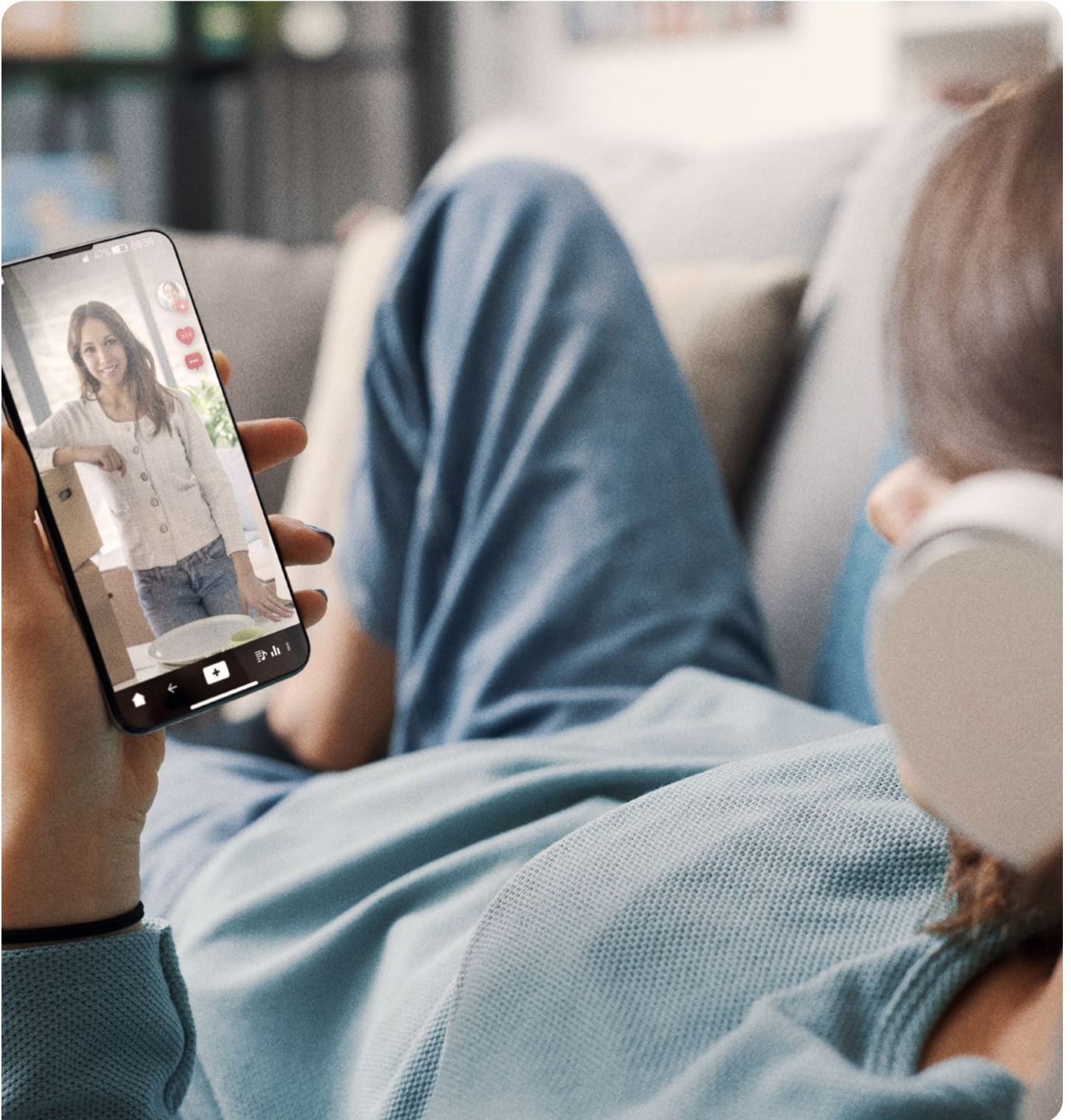
## Tone and format

- Raw, informal, trend-aware, fast.
- Vertical 9:16 only. 15–60 seconds performs best.
- The algorithm rewards completion rate above all. If people watch all the way through, the video spreads.
- Cultural fluency matters: Platform trends move fast. A specific meme format or trending audio clip can go from viral to overused within days, so timely posting is crucial.
- Authenticity is rewarded over production value more strongly here than on any other platform.



## THE PRACTICAL RULE: START WITH ONE AND DO IT WELL

Don't feel like your organization has to be everywhere. You should pick the single platform where your primary audience already spends time, and build a consistent posting schedule there first. If your audience is donors and sector professionals, start with LinkedIn or Facebook. If you're reaching younger community members or building awareness from scratch, start with Instagram Reels. Add platforms once you have a rhythm—not before.



## What's the single goal of your video?

Every video must have one objective, not two or three. One video can't raise awareness AND drive donations AND grow your following. The moment you try to do multiple things in a single short-form video, you dilute the script, the call-to-action (CTA), and the viewer's willingness—and even ability—to act. Your objective shapes what you say, how you say it, and what you ask the viewer to do at the end, so keep it focused.

If you want to achieve multiple goals, then you should make a series, not a single video. A three-part series—one trust-building video, one educational video, one campaign video—is more powerful than one video trying to do all three. Each video does its job better because the content isn't fighting with itself for attention.

To help you home in on your objective, here are the five most common goals for nonprofits, NGOs and government communicators; what each requires from your script; and which template to use.



# 1

## Build trust and emotional connection



This is the foundational goal for any organization that's new to making videos or recovering from overly polished content. You're not trying to convert anyone yet. What you're focusing on is getting your audience to feel that your organization is real, human, and worth paying attention to. So you should prioritize a real face, a genuine story, and a moment of vulnerability or surprise.

The CTA should say something like: "Follow us—we share stories like this [weekly/monthly]."



Use [Template 1 \(Impact Story\)](#) or [Template 2 \(Behind the Scenes\)](#).

## 2

# Drive newsletter signups or material downloads (soft leads)



This is one of the highest-value goals for a comms team. The video's job is to deliver enough value or generate enough curiosity that the viewer wants more from you. Give them something genuinely useful in the video itself (e.g. one real insight, surprising fact, or tip), then direct them to the more comprehensive resource. The viewer should feel like they received a free sample, not a teaser ad.

The CTA should say: “Download the full framework—link in bio.”



Use [Template 4 \(Educational Stop-the-Scroll\)](#)—deliver one insight, then offer the full guide.

# 3

## Drive event registrations or campaign participation



Urgency and social proof are your best friends here. The video needs to convey the value of participating, make the barrier to entry feel low, and create mild FOMO. Real quotes from past participants outperform any promotional copy you can write. Keep the event details like date and time for the caption, don't bring it to the video. Because the video is for emotion, not information.

The CTA should say something like: "Register in the link below. Spots are limited."



Use [Template 3 \(Campaign Announcement\)](#).

# 4

## Educate and build sector authority

Position your organization as the go-to voice on an issue your audience cares about. This is long-game content; it won't necessarily drive immediate conversions, but it builds the trust that makes everything else work. Commit to one specific insight per video, not a general overview: "Here are three things most people get wrong about x" outperforms "An introduction to Y" every time.

The CTA should say something like: "Follow us for more [topic] content."



Use [Template 4 \(Educational Stop-the-Scroll\)](#).



# 5

## Expand reach to a new audience

When your goal is to reach people who don't already know you yet, and organic reach from your existing followers isn't enough, you need the algorithm to distribute your content beyond your audience. This happens when completion rates are high (i.e. people watch all the way through), when people share or save the video, or when the content taps into an existing cultural conversation. This is also where trend-jacking earns its place.

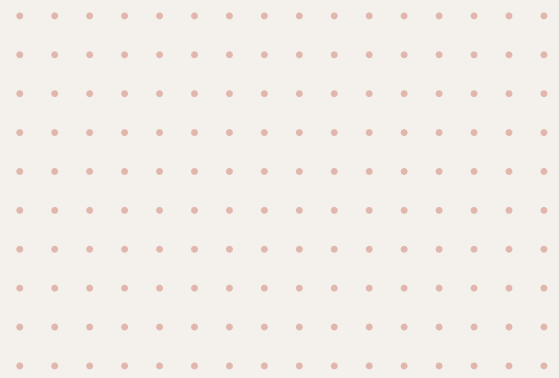
The CTA should say something like: "Share this with someone who needs to hear it." or "Follow for more."



Use [Template 5 \(Trend-Jacking Wildcard\)](#) or [Template 4](#) with a bold hook.

## Is the video accessible to everyone who needs to see it?

Accessibility is not a compliance checkbox. And especially for organizations working in social justice, human rights, Indigenous affairs, and environmental sectors, creating accessibility is essential to mission alignment. Approximately 27% of Canadians live with a disability ([StatsCAN](#))—ignoring accessibility means your content is invisible to 1 in 4 of the people you're trying to reach. It also means leaving reach on the table: 85% of Facebook videos are watched without sound by viewers who have no disability at all ([Digiday](#)).



# ACCESSIBILITY IN ACTION

Here's what accessible video actually means in practice, broken into four concrete areas:

## 1. Captions and text

- Always add captions, noting that auto-generated captions on all major platforms contain errors, especially with names, technical terms, or accents. Always proofread.
- Burn in captions (hardcoded subtitles) for platforms where manual captions may not render (especially if cross-posting). CapCut and Submagic can generate styled animated captions in seconds.
- On-screen text overlays should repeat or reinforce the spoken content, not add new information that a hearing impaired viewer would miss if they read only the captions.
- Caption contrast and visibility is key, such as white text with a dark outline or background bar. Avoid thin fonts, coloured text on coloured backgrounds, or text that disappears too quickly to read.

## 2. Audio and speech

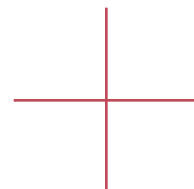
- Clear audio is non-negotiable. A viewer with hearing impairment will leave in seconds if they can't follow you. Film in a quiet space, use a lavalier (lapel) mic if possible, or, at minimum, use the voice memos app to check your audio before filming.
- Speak at a measured pace. If you're speaking too fast and rush through key information, you're excluding people with cognitive or auditory processing differences.
- Avoid background music during speech unless it's at a low enough volume to not interfere with comprehension. Music that competes with voice is one of the most common accessibility failures in short-form video.
- Describe visual content if it's carrying meaning. "As you can see here" means nothing to someone using a screen reader or who has low vision.

### 3. Visual and cognitive clarity

- Avoid flashing content or rapid cuts. More than three flashes per second can trigger photosensitive seizures. This applies to transitions, text animations, and background effects.
- Use plain language throughout. Jargon, acronyms, and sector-specific language exclude community members who are typically the people your programs exist to serve. If you have to use a term, define it in the same sentence.
- One idea per video. Cognitively dense content (trying to explain multiple programs, policies, or concepts all at once) creates barriers to comprehension for viewers with cognitive disabilities, attention differences, or language barriers.
- Ensure adequate reading time for any on-screen text. A good rule: read it silently at your normal pace, then double that time before cutting away.

### 4. Cultural and linguistic inclusion

- Represent the communities you serve, not just your staff. If your work serves Indigenous communities, BIPOC communities, or communities with specific cultural contexts, those communities should be visible in your video content, not just in your written materials.
- Language matters. If your community includes French speakers, Indigenous language speakers, or newcomers, consider whether captions or alternate versions in those languages are appropriate, especially for service announcements or program information.
- Avoid assumptions about shared cultural reference. A hook that relies on a pop culture moment, or a sports metaphor will exclude viewers who don't share that context. When in doubt, root your hook in a universal human experience.
- Review content for unintentional bias. This includes imagery choices, language that centres one perspective, and framing that presents communities as problems rather than agents in their own solutions.



## THE ACCESSIBILITY TEST: DO A SILENT WATCH AND AN AUDIO-ONLY LISTEN

Before posting any video, do two checks:

- **Watch it on mute:** Can you still follow the story and understand the CTA from captions and visuals alone?
- **Listen without watching:** Does the spoken content stand alone, or does it rely on information only visible on screen?

If it fails either test, revise before posting.





# What an effective trust-building video looks like

Before using any template, internalize these principles. They're the difference between content that feels like a press release and content that actually moves people.

## The principles

- Authentic over polished
  - One idea per video
  - Human-centred story
  - Shows impact, not just activity
  - Cognitively appropriate for your audience
  - Aesthetically intentional
  - Hook in three seconds
  - Relatable, real people
  - Ends with a clear next step
- 

# The structure

Every template in this guide follows this underlying sequence. Think of it as your mental checklist before writing a script.

## 1. Hook

0-3 seconds

**Stop the scroll with one compelling statement.**

Open with a question, a surprising fact, or a bold statement that speaks to your viewer's reality. Algorithms use the first three seconds as a quality signal and so does your audience.

## 2. Context

4-10 seconds

**Tell viewers exactly why this matters to them.**

Deliver your value proposition in plain language. What will they gain from watching the next 30 seconds? Be specific. “We help organizations” is noise. “Here’s why 1 in 4 Canadians can’t access your content” is a reason to stay.

## 3. Human story

11-40 seconds

**Lead with a real person.**

This is the trust engine. Show a real face or narrate in an authentic voice because viewers trust what feels real. Slightly imperfect lighting, natural speech, and unforced delivery are definitely assets.

## 4. Proof

40-50 seconds

**Ground the story in a concrete result or data point—one number, one outcome, one quote.**

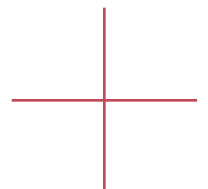
Don’t overwhelm. The goal is to make the story feel true and replicable. “This is what changed”, backed by evidence, is where community trust actually forms.

## 5. Call-to-action

final 5-8 seconds

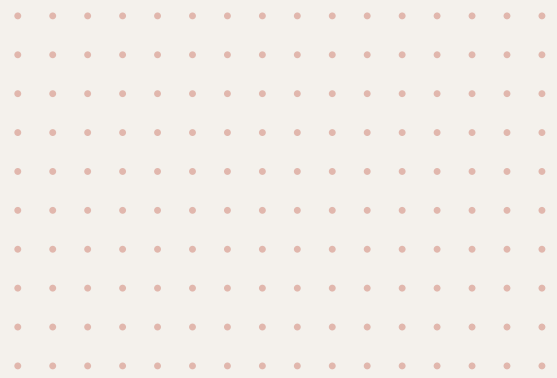
**Give viewers one specific, low-friction next step.**

Use one CTA only, like “Follow for weekly tips”, or “Link in bio to download the guide”. Avoid multiple options, and remember, the best CTA adds value rather than just asking for something.



## 5 ready-to-use script templates

Each template is designed for filming on a smartphone. Every section below explains not just what to say, but why that content works, what it should contain, and how it adapts across different mission areas—social justice, environment, Indigenous affairs, public health, housing, and more. Two scene alternatives are included in each template so you're never starting from zero.



### TEMPLATES IN THIS SECTION

1. [Impact story](#)
2. [Behind-the-scenes](#)
3. [Campaign announcement](#)
4. [Educational stop-the-scroll](#)
5. [Wildcard: Trend-jacking](#)



# 1

## Impact story

This template is for translating an organizational outcome into a human moment. This is your most powerful trust-building format; a story about one person, one place, one animal, or one watershed is always more persuasive than statistics about many.

### IF YOUR GOAL IS:

- ☑ Donor trust
- ☑ Annual report
- ☑ Community credibility



**45–60 SECONDS**



**WHEN TO USE IT**

After completing a program cycle, when you have a beneficiary willing to share, around annual report season, during a fundraising push, or any time you need to prove your work changes something real.

## 1. Hook

0-3 seconds

Stop the scroll before the viewer has a conscious thought. Create unresolved tension, contributing to a before-state so vivid or uncomfortable that the viewer has to keep watching to find out what happened. Name a subject, name the threat, leave the resolution open.

Film the real subject during the hook if possible. Don't open on a logo card or title screen.

### Structure

"[Person's name/This forest/  
This family] almost [lost  
everything/disappeared/  
didn't make it] — until [your  
org/program] stepped in."

### Example

"Maria almost lost her housing  
for the third time in a year ...  
until our tenancy advocacy  
team got involved."

## 2. Context

4-10 seconds

Tell the viewer this story isn't a lucky exception but it's one example of a pattern your organization is actively working against. Use one sentence of scale, one of agency.

### Structure

"Every [year/season], [x  
number of people/animals/  
hectares] face [the challenge].  
Here's what happened when  
[your org] decided to do  
something about it."

### Example

"In this city, 1 in 5 women  
experiencing domestic  
violence can't access shelter  
on their first attempt. We're  
changing that."

### 3. The story

11-42 seconds

Deliver a simple chronological narrative: where things were, what your organization did, where things are now. Use plain, specific language, avoid jargon and acronyms. Specific details (e.g. “for 11 months”) are more powerful than vague ones (e.g. “for a long time”). If your subject is a person, let them speak at least one line in their own voice. If it’s a place or animal, narrate over footage.

Resist explaining your methodology or funding model here. The viewer needs to feel what changed, not understand how.

#### Structure

“[Name/This place] came to us [timeframe] ago. [One sentence describing the situation—their own words if possible]. [One sentence describing what your program did]. Today, [specific outcome: stable housing/water is safe to drink/family is reunited].”

#### Example

“This wetland was drained for agriculture 30 years ago. We began restoration in 2022—replanting native sedges and reintroducing water flow. Today, migratory birds are nesting here for the first time in a generation.”

### 4. Proof

43-52 seconds

Signal this is repeatable, not exceptional. State one number or one outcome as a quiet fact, not a pitch.

If you don’t yet have a specific number, use: “We’ve heard this same story from dozens of families this year alone.” Honesty about scale matters more than inflated stats.

#### Structure

“[Name]’s story isn’t unusual. In [year], we [measurable outcome—supported x families/restored x hectares].”

#### Example

“Katiya’s story isn’t unusual. In 2025, we provided 1,200 First Nations students with the mentorship and scholarships needed to graduate debt-free.”

## 5. Call-to-action

Final 5-8 seconds

Give the emotionally engaged viewer one specific, low-barrier action. A share or follow at this moment is more effective than a donation ask. Save that for someone you have engaged multiple times.

### Structure

“If this story moved you, share it, and follow us for more [mission content]. Every view helps us reach the [people/communities/places] who need this most.”

### Example

“If this story moved you, share it, and follow us for more human rights advocacy. Every view helps us reach the displaced families who need this most.”



## SCENE ALTERNATIVES: TWO WAYS TO FILM THIS

### Scene A

#### The subject tells their own story

Film the person, or a community representative, in a meaningful location—their home, their workplace, the land they steward. Let them deliver the hook line themselves. You narrate context and proof; they carry the emotional core. This is the highest-trust version of this template.

**Setup:** Handheld phone, natural window light on the subject's face, quiet room. The subject looks slightly off-camera toward the interviewer, not dead-on. No ring light needed.

### Scene B

#### Staff narrates over field footage

A team member walks through the site, field, or facility—narrating the story to camera as they move. Works especially well for environmental stories (e.g. walking a restored shoreline), animal welfare (e.g. walking shelter corridors), or land-based Indigenous work where the place itself is the subject. No beneficiary needs to be on camera.

**Setup:** Selfie camera, walking slowly at chest height. Cut between the speaker's face and close-up shots of the environment like soil, water, animals, hands working. Record audio separately if wind noise is an issue outdoors.

# 2

## Behind-the-scenes

This template is for showing the humans, processes, and unglamorous realities behind your mission. When viewers watch your team work, they feel like they know your organization personally. This parasocial familiarity is what converts followers into donors and donors into advocates.

### IF YOUR GOAL IS:

- ☑ Culture
- ☑ Transparency
- ☑ Volunteer recruiting



**45-60 SECONDS**



**WHEN TO USE IT**

Any ordinary day. The less “special” the occasion, the more authentic it reads. Works especially well introducing new staff, showing seasonal field work, or capturing a high-effort moment that would otherwise be invisible to the public.

## 1. Hook

0-3 seconds

Promise access to something the viewer has never seen. Open in the middle of something already happening, not with a talking head. The spoken hook names the gap between public perception and operational reality.

The activity is the visual hook, and the words confirm it.

### Structure

“Most people never see what it actually takes to [protect this ecosystem/run this shelter/deliver this service]. Here’s a look inside.”

### Example

“Most people think government programs run themselves. Here’s the team that actually makes [program name] happen.”

## 2. Context

4-10 seconds

Briefly name who you are, what day this is, what’s being done. Think of it as the establishing shot of a documentary. Specific days and tasks are far more interesting than “a typical day at our organization”.

### Structure

“We’re [org/team name]. Today is [the specific thing happening].”

### Example

“This is our legal aid clinic. Today we’re processing 12 refugee status applications—all before noon.”

### 3. The human focus

11-42 seconds

Centre on one team member or volunteer. Describe their role in plain language, then share one thing about that role that most people would never guess—something that reveals the complexity, care, or scale of what’s required.

Then show them actually doing it. The “what most people don’t know” moment is what gets this video saved and shared.

Don’t cut to different speakers or locations in this section. The power of behind-the-scenes content is sustained, unhurried attention on one person doing one thing. Let the video work breathe.

#### Structure

“This is [name]. Their job is to [plain-language role description]. What most people don’t know is [surprising, humanizing, or complex detail about that work]. [Continue narrating over footage of them doing the task—don’t cut to a new speaker. Let the work be visible.]”

#### Example

“This is Priya. She’s a community navigator for families experiencing food insecurity. What most people don’t know is she speaks five languages—because the families she works with need to be heard in their own words.”

### 4. Proof

43-52 seconds

Connect this individual moment to the larger mission. Use one plain sentence about why this work matters, then an optional outcome stat. This lifts the viewer from “that was interesting” to “I want to support this.”

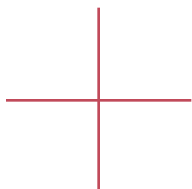
Don’t read the mission statement verbatim. Say it like you’d explain it to a friend who just asked what you do for work.

#### Structure

“Days like today are why [mission in one plain sentence]. [Optional: In [year], our team [did x measurable thing].]”

#### Example

“Days like today are why we work to ensure every community has access to clean, safe drinking water.”



## 5. Call-to-action

Final 5-8 seconds

Invite the viewer to follow your organization to see more of this content, in order to learn more and understand the work you do.

### Structure

“Want to see more of what actually goes into this work? Follow us—we share updates from the people making [mission] happen every [week/month].”

### Example

“Want to see more of what actually goes into this work? Follow us—we share updates from the people who make rainforest conservation happen every day.”



## SCENE ALTERNATIVES: TWO WAYS TO FILM THIS

### Scene A

#### The “follow me to work” walk

A staff member films themselves walking into the workspace—a field site, a shelter, a community kitchen, a forest plot—narrating as they go. This mimics the “day in my life” style that performs strongly on Reels and TikTok. No editing is required beyond trimming the start and end. This works especially well for field-based environmental or restoration work.

**Setup:** Front-facing camera at arm’s length. Walk slowly enough to be understood. For visual variety, start outside approaching the door.

### Scene B

#### The task close-up series

Film 4–6 short close-up clips of hands doing tasks. Cut together with a voiceover. No one needs to appear on camera in the traditional sense, the work is the face of the video.

**Setup:** Rear camera for close-ups. Use natural light from a nearby window. Record voiceover as a voice memo and add in CapCut or Descript.

# 3

## Campaign announcement

This template is for driving a specific, time-bound action like event registrations, petition signatures, campaign participation, program launches, adoption days, community gatherings. The failure mode is treating it like a press release: leading with the initiative name, dates, and org context. Viewers don't share press releases: they share something that made them feel like they'd miss out.

### IF YOUR GOAL IS:

- ☑ Events
- ☑ Fundraisers
- ☑ Program launches



**45-60 SECONDS**



**WHEN TO USE IT**

1-2 weeks before an event or deadline, at program launch, during active fundraising, or when mobilizing a community around a specific moment.

## 1. Hook

0-3 seconds

Create tension between what the viewer knows about the video content (i.e. nothing) and what they're about to find out. Don't name the event. Don't say, "We're excited to announce." The hook is a statement of stakes—something is happening that matters.

Logistical details (date, time, location, cost) go in the caption, not the video. The video carries the emotion; the caption carries the information.

### Structure

"Something is happening [in this city/for this community/for this cause] on [date] — and you're going to want to be part of it."

### Example

"For the first time in 40 years, this community is hosting a public feast open to all—and we want you there."

## 2. Context

4-10 seconds

Now name the initiative and state the specific benefit to the participant. The viewer is asking, "Is this for me?" Answer specifically. "For anyone who cares about the environment" is less welcoming than it sounds. Specificity feels more inclusive, not less.

### Structure

"We've been [building/ planning] [initiative name] for [timeframe]. It's designed for [specific audience] who want [specific outcome or experience]."

### Example

"We've been planning this shoreline cleanup for six months. It's for families, first-time volunteers, and anyone who wants to do something tangible for the coast they love."

### 3. Social proof

11-42 seconds

Give the viewer a reason to act beyond your word. One authentic quote from a past participant converts better than a paragraph of organizational language. If this is a new initiative, use a team member speaking honestly about why they built it. It's better if you can film the person speaking directly into the camera.

#### Structure

"Last [year/time], when we did [previous related initiative], [person] told us: '[authentic quote—specific, emotional, brief].' That's exactly why we built [new initiative]. [One sentence about what participants will actually experience, gain, or walk away with.]"

#### Example

"At last year's consultation, a resident named Ruth raised a safety concern that wasn't captured in any planning documents—and it ended up changing the route of a major infrastructure project. Your voice matters too."

### 4. Urgency

43-52 seconds

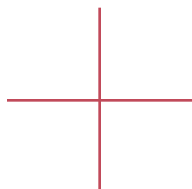
Create a legitimate reason to act now. Focus on real urgency like limited spots or a close deadline. If no constraint exists, use social proof as momentum: "x people have already signed up."

#### Structure

"Spots are limited to [x] and we expect to fill by [date]. [or: Registration closes [date]./[x] people have already signed up since we opened [x]]."

#### Example

"Registration closes on September 27. Act fast as 89 people have already signed up for the 100 spots since we opened access this morning."



## 5. Call-to-action

Final 5-8 seconds

Guide people how to register and share the video to the others.

### Structure

“The link is in [x]. Registration takes [x] minutes. Share this with [x, y, z].”

### Example

“The link is in the bio. Registration takes two minutes. Share this with someone who should be in the room.”

## SCENE ALTERNATIVES: TWO WAYS TO FILM THIS

### Scene A

#### The direct-to-camera invite

The person who built the program speaks directly to the camera, personally inviting the viewer—not as a spokesperson reading a copy, but as a person talking to a friend. Film outdoors at your field site, or in a space that connects to the initiative. Informality signals authenticity and location signals credibility.

**Setup:** Front-facing camera at eye level, outside or near a window. Slightly handheld feels more personal for this format than a tripod. Speak slowly; smile at the beginning and end.

### Scene B

#### Past-event footage + voiceover

Compile 5–8 short clips from a previous edition (people arriving, hands-on moments, a group gathering, a visible reaction from a participant). Record a voiceover narrating the new event’s invitation. This works especially well for recurring events. It shows rather than tells what the experience looks like.

**Setup:** Assemble in CapCut using auto-captions for your voiceover. Keep each clip to 3–5 seconds. Only use footage of people who’ve consented to being filmed publicly.

# 4

## Educational stop-the-scroll

This template is for building authority by delivering a specific, genuinely useful insight in under 60 seconds. Educational clips are the most-saved and most-shared short-form format because they give the viewer something they can use or pass on. This is your most powerful tool for making complex policy, ecological science, or social systems understandable, without dumbing them down or burying your audience in jargon.

### IF YOUR GOAL IS:

- ☑ Policy/Awareness
- ☑ Thought leadership
- ☑ Lead magnets



**45–60 SECONDS;  
TIGHTER IS BETTER**



### WHEN TO USE IT

When you have a counterintuitive fact, a misconception to correct, a policy change people should know about, a “how it actually works” explanation nobody has made simple, or a practical tip your audience can act on immediately. This is also the ideal format for newsletter signups: deliver one insight, then offer the full guide as the download.

## 1. Hook

0-3 seconds

Challenge the viewer on something they think they already know. The most powerful hooks create a “Wait, really?” moment—a gap between what the viewer assumed and what’s actually true. Don’t warm up.

Don’t introduce yourself. Start with the surprising thing.

Alternative hook formats: “Three things [your audience] needs to know about [topic], #2 surprises most people.”/“The real reason [common problem] keeps happening isn’t what you think.”/“Stop me if you’ve heard this wrong before: [misconception].”

### Structure

“Most people don’t know that [misconception/surprising gap in public knowledge about your issue area].”

### Example

“Most people think recycling is the most important thing they can do for the planet. The data says otherwise.”

## 2. Value promise

4-10 seconds

Make a specific, achievable promise about what the viewer will understand or be able to do by the end.

### Structure

“In the next [30/45] seconds, I’m going to show you [specific, concrete things they will understand, know, or be able to do].”

### Example

“In 30 seconds, I’ll explain what to do if you find an injured wild animal—because most people do the wrong thing by accident.”

Deliver on the promise with exactly three points. Point 1 establishes the reality. Point 2 reveals what most people miss—the insight that drives saves and shares. Point 3 brings it back to the viewer’s own life or what they can do with this.

Add numbered, on-screen text overlays for each point—this drives “saves” because viewers want to come back and review. It also makes the video followable with sound off.

#### Structure

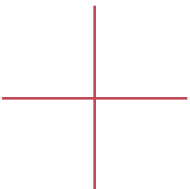
“Here’s what’s actually happening: [Point 1—the true situation, 1-2 plain sentences]. Most people miss this part: [Point 2—the counterintuitive or under-discussed insight]. And here’s what that means for you: [Point 3—direct, practical relevance to the viewer’s life, work, or decisions].”

#### Example

P1: “If you find a bird stunned after hitting a window, it’s probably not dead—it’s in shock.”

P2: “Moving it immediately makes the shock worse. Place it in a ventilated box in a quiet, dark space for 1-2 hours first.”

P3: “If it hasn’t recovered after two hours, call a wildlife rehabilitator. Here’s how to find one in Canada.”



Match the ask to the viewer's natural next step. For authority content: save + follow. For lead magnet use: name the downloadable resource directly.

### Structure

"Save this if it was useful and follow us for more [topic] content every [cadence]. Or drop your question in the comments, and we'll cover it in the next video."

For lead magnet use: "We've turned this into a full [guide/checklist/framework]— see the link in our bio to download it free. It only takes two minutes."

### Example

"Save this if it was useful and follow us for more birdwatching tips every Friday. Or drop your question in the comments, and we'll cover it in the next video."

## SCENE ALTERNATIVES: TWO WAYS TO FILM THIS

### Scene A

#### Talking head with text overlays

A knowledgeable team member speaks directly to the camera as a subject matter expert. They don't need to be charismatic; they need to be specific and clear. Authenticity of expertise builds more trust than polish of delivery. Add numbered text overlays in CapCut for each of the three points.

**Setup:** Front-facing camera, seated or standing still, window light on the face. Use a plain or work-relevant background. No need to memorize: use a teleprompter app and one rehearsal run-through.

### Scene B

#### In-the-field explanation

Film the speaker at the location their expertise is about. The environment provides visual evidence for every claim being made, and grounds the knowledge in lived, direct expertise rather than theoretical knowledge.

**Setup:** Rear camera for landscape shots, switch to front-facing for the speaker's face. Wind noise is the main outdoor challenge—use a cheap lapel mic (\$20–30), or record the voiceover indoors and sync to field footage in CapCut.

# 5

## Wildcard: Trend-jacking

### IF YOUR GOAL IS:

- ☑ New audience reach
- ☑ Awareness
- ☑ Discovery

This template is for reaching people who would never seek you out. The previous four templates work best with audiences that already follow you. Trend-jacking breaks out of that circle by attaching your message to a cultural moment, format, or audio that is already carrying attention at scale. The algorithm distributes trending content to people who don't follow you. That is the asset you are borrowing.



**45-60 SECONDS;  
TIGHTER IS BETTER**



### WHEN TO USE IT

Opportunistically, not on a schedule; when a trend surfaces that has a natural, unforced connection to your sector. Forced trend-jacking that ignores the 80/20 rule reads as desperate and loses followers.



### THE 80/20 RULE

80% of what you deliver must be independently useful, funny, or interesting. Only 20% can carry your message. The moment your organization's needs outweigh the viewer's experience, the trust is broken.

Trigger the scroll-stopping recognition of a known format. Open with the trend itself—a familiar audio cue, a text format the viewer recognizes, a challenge structure they've seen before. You are borrowing the viewer's existing positive association with the trend and redirecting it. Do not deviate from the format in the first 2–3 seconds.

Spend 10 minutes on your platform's discovery feed daily. Act within 24–72 hours of a trend surfacing. After five days, the audience has moved on and your version will feel like a week-old meme.

### Structure

[Open using the trending audio, text structure, or visual format exactly—the recognition is the hook. Do not modify it in the first 2–3 seconds.]

### Example

“Tell me you work in conservation without telling me you work in conservation.”

[Staff show muddy boots, a field notebook, a 5 a.m. alarm, a car full of sampling equipment. Funny and humanizing—no organizational tone required.]



## 2. Pivot

4-20 seconds

Introduce your organizational context in a way that feels like a natural extension of the trend, not a pivot to a pitch. Your mission enters through the trend's frame. The best pivots feel like the trend was made for this sector all along.

### Structure

[Continue using the trend's format, now applying it to your sector's specific reality. Let the mission context emerge from the content, don't announce it as a pivot.]

### Example

Using a trending audio about personal growth: apply it to a rescue animal's recovery arc: "Day 1 vs. Day 60." The emotional parallel between the trend's theme and the animal's journey is what makes it land.

## 3. Value payoff

21-42 seconds

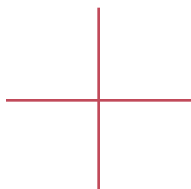
Deliver something the viewer would share or save regardless of your organizational context. Ask yourself: "If my organization's name wasn't in this video, would a stranger still share it?" If yes—post it. If no, it's an ad dressed as a trend.

### Structure

[Deliver the genuinely useful, interesting, funny, or emotionally resonant content. This is the 80%. It stands alone.]

### Example

A housing advocate using a "red flag/green flag" format to explain good and bad landlord behaviour—genuinely useful tenant education in a familiar format. This gets saved by people who need it and shared by people who know someone who does.



Invite the viewer to follow your organization to see more of this content, in order to learn more and understand the work you do.

##### Structure

“Follow us — we [describe your content in the viewer’s language: e.g. share what actually happens in wildlife rescue/break down housing policy for normal people/translate environmental science into plain English] every [frequency].”

##### Example

“Follow us—we share frontline stories of land restoration and wildlife rescue every single week!

### DO’S AND DON’TS

**Do:** Adapt the trend’s structure to your sector’s genuine reality. Use trending audio with your own visuals. Credit cultural sources when the trend originates from a specific community.

**Don’t:** Don’t force a trend that doesn’t fit. Don’t use audio from politically charged or controversial content—the association will follow your video. Don’t bury a donation ask inside a trend video.

### THE 80/20 TEST

Remove your organization’s name and logo. Would a stranger still watch, share, or save it? If yes, post it. If no, it’s an ad dressed as a trend.



The background is a solid teal color. In the top right corner, there is a detailed illustration of a plant branch with several large, serrated leaves. In the bottom left corner, there is another illustration of a plant branch with several long, narrow, pointed leaves. The text 'Tools and resources' is centered in the middle of the page in a bold, dark teal serif font. Below the text is a decorative double chevron symbol, consisting of two parallel lines forming a downward-pointing V shape.

# **Tools and resources**



## Free and low-cost editing tools for non-designers

The following tools are used by communicators who produce consistent, high-performing video content on their own:



### CANVA (VIDEO)

Templates, text overlays, captions, branding. Best for structured content.



### SUBMAGIC

AI-generated animated captions. Fast, accurate, and accessible.



### CAPCUT

Auto-captions, trend templates, transitions. Best for TikTok/Reels.



### IPHONE/ANDROID NATIVE

Built-in stabilization and good audio. Often outperforms expensive gear.



### DESCRIPT

Edit video by editing text transcript. Excellent for talking-head formats.



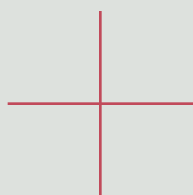
### TELEPROMPTER APPS

Teleprompter+ or Speeko, maintain eye contact while following a script.

While DIY tools are perfect for day-to-day social content, consider partnering with an agency or production team for things like high-stakes flagship videos, major gala presentations, and complex campaign launches. This is most effective when you're ready to expand your strategy and have the budget to invest in higher-tier content, or simply when your internal team lacks the bandwidth to maintain a consistent output.

## Pre-publish checklist before you post

- ☐ The hook lands within the first 3 seconds—no preamble, no logos.
- ☐ The video has one clear goal (not two or three).
- ☐ A real person or real situation is visible, not just graphics.
- ☐ Audio is clear; test with headphones before posting.
- ☐ Closed captions are added and proofread (not just auto-generated).
- ☐ The CTA is specific and singular.
- ☐ The video is correctly formatted for the platform (9:16 for Reels/TikTok/Shorts).
- ☐ Any on-screen text is readable at mobile size.
- ☐ The length is appropriate: 30–60 seconds for social, up to 3 minutes for YouTube.
- ☐ Content has been reviewed for cultural sensitivity and representation.





1090 Homer Street, Suite 300,  
Vancouver, British Columbia, V6B 2W9, Canada

[www.beaconcollective.com](http://www.beaconcollective.com)

604.949.3866

### **Enjoyed this guide? Don't stop here.**

Every month we send out actionable tips straight to your inbox.  
Sign up to receive The Beacon Beat for ongoing support!

### **Want us to write or optimize your video scripts for you?**

Skip the trial-and-error. Book a 30-minute Strategy Call to review your current video pipeline and map out your next 90 days of content.