

A Seenit mini-guide to UGC

Remote video production during COVID-19

From news production to internal communications and advertising, video production professionals are adapting their creative muscles to great effect.





Photo by Tiziana

Introduction

These last weeks and months have really demonstrated the value of storytelling. In a world where physical interaction has been temporarily eliminated, people are craving human connection like never before.

In past mini-guides we have looked at how organisations can use employee-led video to tell collaborative stories. How they can overcome the enforced remote working environment and actually deepen relationships with colleagues and clients.

But if broadcasting is your livelihood already - what then?

Like many other industries, professional video production has been transformed almost overnight.

No more studios, newsrooms, crowded edit suites or filmsets teeming with people. Before our eyes, we are seeing an entire profession reinventing itself.

People who have previously relied upon vast networks of colleagues, complex technologies and astronomical budgets are making things happen with just their phones, laptops and a little creativity.

An abundance of stories that might, in the past, have been overblown, expensive and inauthentic are now being told from the heart.

And people are watching.

From [national news production](#) to internal communications and advertising, video professionals are adapting and flexing their creative muscles to great effect.

At Seenit, we are not surprised!



Photo by Elle

We have spent the last six years working in this way - encouraging remote collaborations and user-generated content (UGC).

Our philosophy is simple:

- UGC video is the perfect medium for impactful storytelling - all you need is the phone in your pocket
- It really provokes emotion and brings out the human connection your audience craves
- UGC makes your video more authentic, real and relatable than professionally-shot content

In this guide we will look at how video production professionals are changing their way of working - perhaps forever.



Photo by Tiziana

Restrictions? What restrictions?!

As with any seismic shift in working practice, it can take some time for the shock to subside and the ramifications to become clear.

But **enforced change**, of the kind caused by the Coronavirus pandemic, can actually spur people into action. With no alternative but to accentuate the positives and embrace new opportunities, humans can be resourceful creatures.

The reality is, for people who shoot video, things just got a lot more straightforward!

Logistics, shooting calendars, crew rosters - all of the boundaries and costly considerations that made shooting professional video difficult have simply disappeared:

- **Travel** - Not really an option during a lockdown. Video can easily be crowdsourced, and filming multiple people in different locations simply requires a phone or webcam, decent internet connection
- **Resources** - Everyone is in the same boat, so the spirit of collaboration is heightened
- **Equipment** - Simplicity and authenticity is key. There is no need for huge cameras, sound and lighting equipment when you are shooting everything with your mobile phone in your bedroom!
- **Budget** - Don't worry, nobody has any! Crowdsourcing video only costs a fraction of professionally shot video

In short: None of the old bells and whistles matter any more. Video can be stripped back to its purest form. And it can be done fast. Video professionals are realising they can produce all the same types of content they were producing before, and they can do it cheaper, quicker and with greater authenticity.



Photo by Diana

I'm ready for my close-up now...

One immediate impact of the current situation is that highly-polished production values have gone out of the window.

The real value for the audience has been redefined. Now the story itself has become everything. It's in the narrative, the personalities of the people involved and the words they are saying. Nobody is expecting luxuriously-shot, stylised content anymore - the audience's expectations have fallen through the floor. Empathy and understanding are at an all time high, with people craving moving stories, honestly told.

This has created a truly level playing field for video content.

Household names like [Graham Norton](#) and [Ant & Dec](#) have cheerfully swapped glitzy studios for their own homes. There is a real feeling of solidarity and togetherness sweeping the media and the nation - and video is at the heart of it.

Video - the 'human medium'



Photo by Juliet

As we all adapt to this 'new normal' that people keep talking about, video has become an essential tool. It is our outlet for communication. Our connection to the outside world.

This has manifested in lots of wonderful, unexpected ways. People are becoming more confident. They are seizing the moment, talking to each other more, and making themselves available to others who might need support.

People who were previously embarrassed to switch on their webcams during conference calls are now hosting Zoom sessions and quiz nights. Everywhere, people are getting more comfortable with being on camera and showing their true selves.

For Seenit, this is fantastic to witness. We are seeing a new creative confidence from the general public across broadcast, online and social media channels. Experts, frontline workers and people simply staying at home during lockdown can all contribute to the conversation - and these real, crowdsourced stories are exactly what video production professionals are looking for as they adapt to a new way of working.

How Coronavirus is changing the game for video professionals



Photo by Elisa

1. Broadcasters and production companies



UGC has the potential to create powerful and authentic content. It opens up possibilities for new ways of thinking for producers when creating content, and using tools like Seenit can help streamline processes that would otherwise be onerous for production teams.

Producer // BBC



The public appetite for news and current affairs has never been greater.

Logistically, there are challenges for the broadcasting industry. Sound engineers, video mixers, producers and journalists are no longer tight, collaborative units, but dispersed and isolated, so they are having to find new ways to work.

With a captive audience out there glued to their TVs, radios and newsfeeds every day, they have had to adapt fast. Before our eyes, we are seeing the world of broadcasting changing.

Talking heads are no longer shot in beautifully-lit studios, but in their own living rooms on grainy video with kids and pets popping up all over the place.

But the audience has adapted too. We appreciate news stories for their ingenuity, heart and imagination. We are suspicious of anything that looks remotely ‘professionally-shot’. This is a time for improvisation and ‘fly-on-the-wall’ film-making.

And it is not just news. Production companies, documentary-makers and other broadcasters are creating authentic videos with their communities around the world - and the story is always at the centre:

Channel 4: “Paralympians - training from home”



Channel 4 is using Seenit to show how Paralympians are training from home.

BBC: “Britain vs Covid” (episodes coming soon)

The BBC are using Seenit right now to create stories with the NHS and front-line workers.

BBC: The Highs & Lows Of Freshers’ Week



Long before the lockdown, the BBC explored UGC already. Here they wanted to explore the topic of mental health among university students. This emotive and honest programme shows how effective this method of storytelling can be to empower people to speak up and be comfortable sharing about intimate topics.



Photo by Megan

2. Internal comms professionals

Before we had the Seenit tool we were only able to film people in this office. Now we can use video globally across all of our markets and we get that sense of inclusion and diversity. It's really great for helping us thrive as a company.

Employer Brand Creative // Vodafone



Some larger companies have dedicated video production for internal communications, company events and CSR initiatives. For these video professionals, too, the normal ways of working have disappeared.

Their challenge remains to produce compelling content for their colleagues, partners and clients, and as we have already seen, in some ways, their lives have been simplified due to the current crisis.

Diary management got a lot easier: The boss is always at home! Colleagues who might previously have baulked at contributing content have been emboldened. For everyone, webcams and speaking to camera are now normal concepts.

We've been impressed at some of the ingenious ways Seenit customers working in internal comms are meeting their Covid-19 related challenges:

Companywide and leadership communication

Companies like Novartis, Rubix and Liberty Global are ensuring their CEOs and leaders show solidarity with their teams. This helps to build trust and avoid the spread of misinformation whilst also providing empathy and authenticity during challenging times. Leadership teams are all at home facing the same issues as the rest of the employee base, so this is a chance to humanise them and demonstrate togetherness.

Seenit : Leadership Q&A



At Seenit our leadership team is open to answer any question we might have.

Employee moral and wellbeing

Now, more than ever, creating an inclusive and engaged culture is critical for employee wellbeing and productivity. Frankly, the survival of our businesses depends on it. Seenit customers co-ordinate regular Q&A videos between employees and HR teams to support their people, share best practices, and keep engagement high.

Positive employee stories

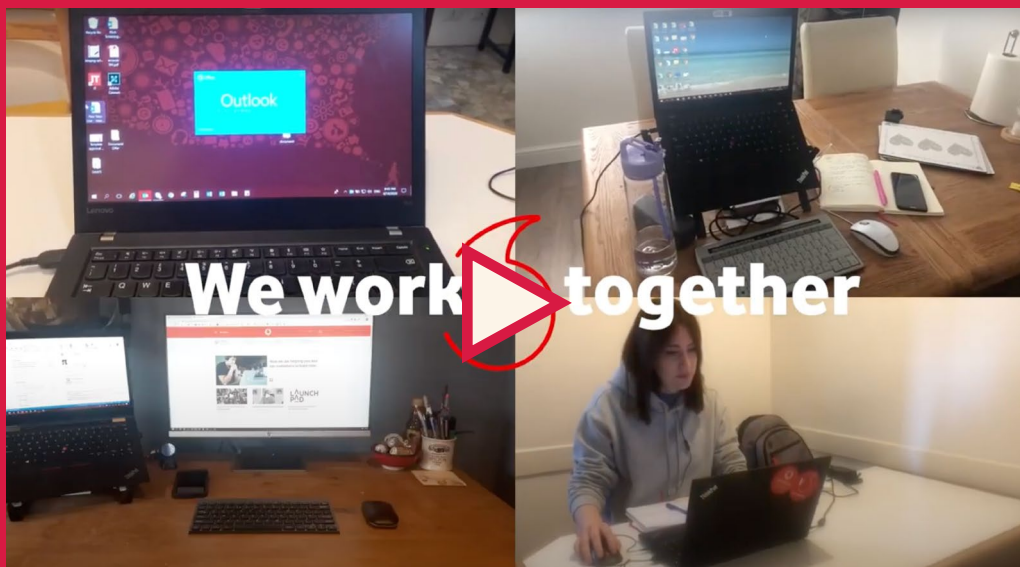
Another trend that has come to the fore in the last couple of weeks involves ongoing projects with recurring formats and weekly episodes. Some companies are asking their employees to share positive news stories to compensate for the current overload of constant bad news. These stories are then edited into weekly video episodes made up of good news stories, tips on working from home and operational updates.

Colt | 24 hours of #ColtiesAtHome



We love this feel-good video from Colt Technology Services, whose employees filmed their day from dawn until dusk - all captured and edited through the Seenit platform.

Vodafone | How We Stay Connected



Vodafone pulled together over 100 clips from colleagues working from home around the world. A challenging task made easy by the Seenit app.

3.

Advertising and PR Agencies



Photo by Emily

Traditionally, some of the most innovative, groundbreaking video content has been dreamt up by advertising professionals and marketers.

As with their fellow story-telling professionals, it has not taken them long to change their approach to messaging, instinctively tapping into the public's appetite for human stories, honestly told.

Again, the production values have gone from their approach, and the first adverts shot exclusively using user-generated content began hitting our screens days after the lockdown began.

Advertisers understand that this 'hyper-real', comforting content is what people are craving, particularly if it highlights front-line workers - nurses, shop assistants, delivery drivers - hard at work keeping the country moving.

For now, aspirational, commercial, capitalist fantasies have been replaced by something more genuine and homespun.

At Seenit we have been working this way for six years - helping to connect storytellers with their audiences on a deeper level. Now, more than ever, it's what the world needs.

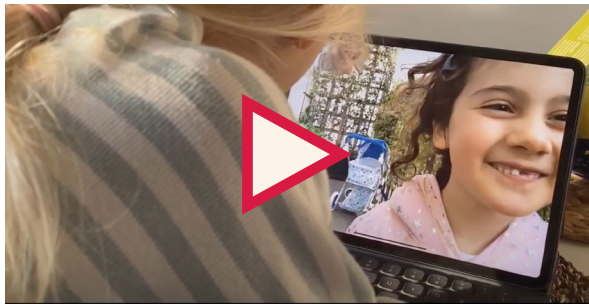


Technology really does have the power to unify us and I hope our story of a totally isolated team delivering a first class ad from their home offices and kitchen tables will inspire other brands to adapt and challenge their traditional thinking to create unique stories of their own.

Consumer Director // Vodafone UK

A new world for advertising

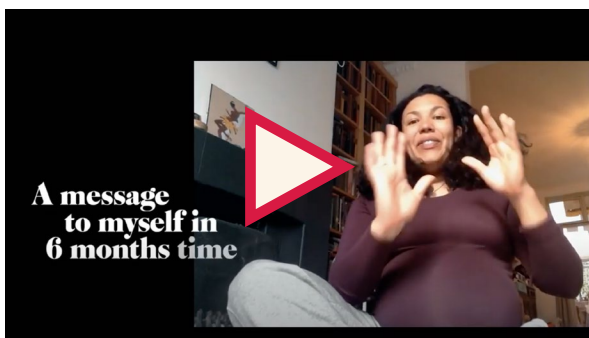
Large, international brands who usually put millions into their TV advertising are now crowdsourcing video and producing some of their most honest, heartwarming work.



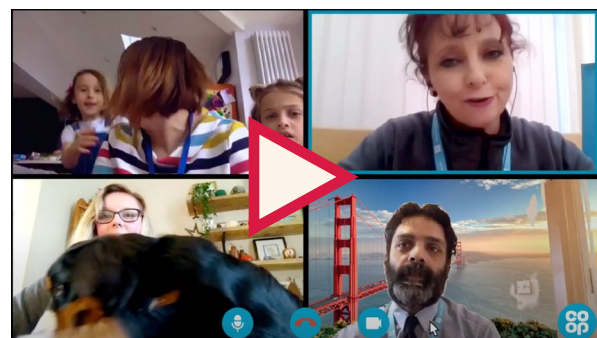
Vodafone Italy's latest commercial is made entirely using UGC



Tesco launches their new "Food Love Stories" campaign inviting the great British public to film and submit their home-cooking stories during isolation



Personal message from a Nationwide customer to her future self



Co-op staff promoting charitable initiative in the style of a Zoom call

No-one really knows how long this situation will last.

. There will come a time when a sense of normality will return, and people can get back to the 'old ways' of working.

For video professionals, that will almost certainly mean embracing high production values once again - and reacquainting themselves with all the old bells and whistles: The high-tech equipment, lavish sets and international travel.

But this whole experience might lead to some reflection too.

Every crisis produces opportunity. Forces people to think differently and look at new, creative ways of working. For professional video production, maybe the shift in focus from style to substance will remain a little longer - and user-generated content will remain a key format for many years to come.

At Seenit, it's what we do, and what we have always done.



This is not the first time the world of broadcasting has faced cataclysmic change. In 2007, the Writers Guild of America went on strike for more than 100 days. In the absence of long-running soaps, sitcoms and serials, non-scripted 'Reality TV' shows became staples across America - and beyond. Shows like American Idol, Dancing with the Stars and Deal or No Deal became global ratings sensations - despite having budgets that were a fraction of their scripted counterparts.

It just to show, when circumstances change unexpectedly, a bit of lateral thinking can turn things around. The versatility of video will find a way!

About Seenit

We have told over 300,000 stories. Hundreds of companies are using Seenit to bring their stories and events to life through people powered video content.

[Talk To A Video Expert](#)



Simplify

Simplify and diversify your video content



Engage

Engage and encourage your people to be at the forefront



Grow

Grow, foster, and enhance productivity and engagement