

TEDx Production Guide

Video will not only open your talks to a world-wide audience but they will give your event a permanent life online. The better your production quality, the better the chances that your speaker's ideas have of succeeding.

Below are specs of the standard set-up we recommend to TEDx events. Meeting these guidelines is one of the best ways of getting your talks on TED.com (next to thorough speaker preparation). If you can't afford to match this high a level of production, don't worry: read through everything and then check out our final section to set your priorities.

Stage Design:

- Every stage **MUST** include your official TEDx logo with your full event name. Never use the TEDx logo without your location name. Never, ever use the TED logo.



- For slides and other media, use a screen with a 16:9 aspect ratio -- large enough to display text that is legible in the back row.
- Raise your screen well above the head of your speaker to ensure all cameras get a clean shot of the speaker.

- If you can't raise your screen high enough, place the speakers' "home-base" position to the side of the screen.



- Showcase your region, city, or culture through your stage design. Though not a requirement, we love culturally specific props and visual elements. They will give your event a unique personality and provide our global audience with a sense of the diversity in the TEDx community.
- If you are using drape or a curtain as your backdrop, do not use black or very dark colors. If you must, try to break-up the black background with other stage elements. These will help create separation between the speaker and the background on your video recordings.

Lighting:

Remember that you are lighting for a video production. Creating an image that works for the camera is very different from your standard stage lighting. If possible, consult with a Lighting Director familiar with video production. If not, instruct your production crew to follow these guidelines:

- Key Light – You need a primary light source that hits the speakers from one side not too far above the head. You should prevent lighting from directly above the speakers -- it creates dark shadows on the eyes, below the nose, and under the chin.
- Fill Light – Place a light at a lower strength on the opposite side of the Key Light. This is typically a soft light pointed at the speakers' front that reduces the harsh shadows produced by the Key Light.

- Edge/Backlight – This might be the most important light to remember. Position lights behind and/or from the side the speaker. This light should create a hair-light and sharp edge that separates the speaker from the background. Here's an extreme case-in-point, in blue, so you can see the effect:

- Without a backlight, the image will look flat. Notice here how it's impossible to tell where the speaker ends and the backdrop begins:



- No Single Spot – Do not use a spotlight.



- Backdrop and Stage Lighting – Light enough of the stage so the speakers can roam around. Put a light on your TEDx event's logo and if possible, light or colored light your drape or background.
- Audience Lighting – If you're capturing video of your audience (and you certainly should), consider this during your lighting scheme with either a soft wash, or a soft wash and backlight.
- Keep light off the screen! - Do everything you can to prevent light from spilling onto the screen. It would hugely damage both the live and recorded experiences.

Audio:

Audio might be the most important thing. If your video turns our badly for any reason, it's probably salvageable. If your audio is bad, it isn't. We urge you to follow these guidelines closely.

- Type of Mics – We've found that DPA headset mics work best. We recommend [omni directional mic \(4066\)](#) or the [directional mic \(4088\)](#) if you have a singer/performer not using a handheld. Make sure all the mics are the same color! And, of course, don't forget to have amplified sound in your space so your whole audience can hear what's going on!
- Mic Positions – Be sure to mic the speakers, hosts, and audience. It's important to get a feel for the room and the crowd's reactions.
- Multi-Track Pro Tools Recording – This is the best way to ensure we get clean audio from the event. If you can arrange it, have someone record individual tracks for each input -- that will help in post-production. Get individual inputs from all speaker mics, ambient/ audience mics, host mics, and of course any pre-programmed sound from videos and presentations.
- Pre-Mix Inputs – Send the inputs to Pro Tools **BEFORE** they get mixed live. This will ensure that any problems you have with the live event sound will not carry over into our recording.
- Send a reference track to the camera recordings. This can be the live mix or the Pro Tools mix but you need to record something to the cameras so everything can be synchronized later.

Recording video:

Essential equipment:

- 4 identical cameras (same model) that, at minimum, record in 720p
- Appropriate lenses to achieve necessary frame sizes (depicted below)
- Enough AJA Kipros to capture each camera's feed and a GFX feed

We prefer if you record at a Frame Rate of 23.97 in Apple Pro Res 422 and, if possible, every camera should record each session in one take. You may need rent individual AJA Kipro recorders for each camera to do this.

Also, please also arrange to record the GFX feed of slides and videos -- it will be extremely helpful during editing. We recommend recording directly to an AJA Kipro.

Live mix:

Not a requirement, but If you plan on live steaming your event, you will need to produce a live mix. Even if you're not, you may still want to -- it will help expedite the editing process.

But remember: Each camera **MUST** record its own content. Do **NOT** rely solely on the live mix. Good editing is essential to a successful talk and, no matter how good your producers are, it's highly unlikely they will be able to meet the necessary standards in the live mix alone. More on editing later.

Things you'll need:

- A multi-camera and GFX switch
- Another AJA Kipro for recording the live mix
- A Director/Tech Director to call and switch between cameras and GFX

Live stream:

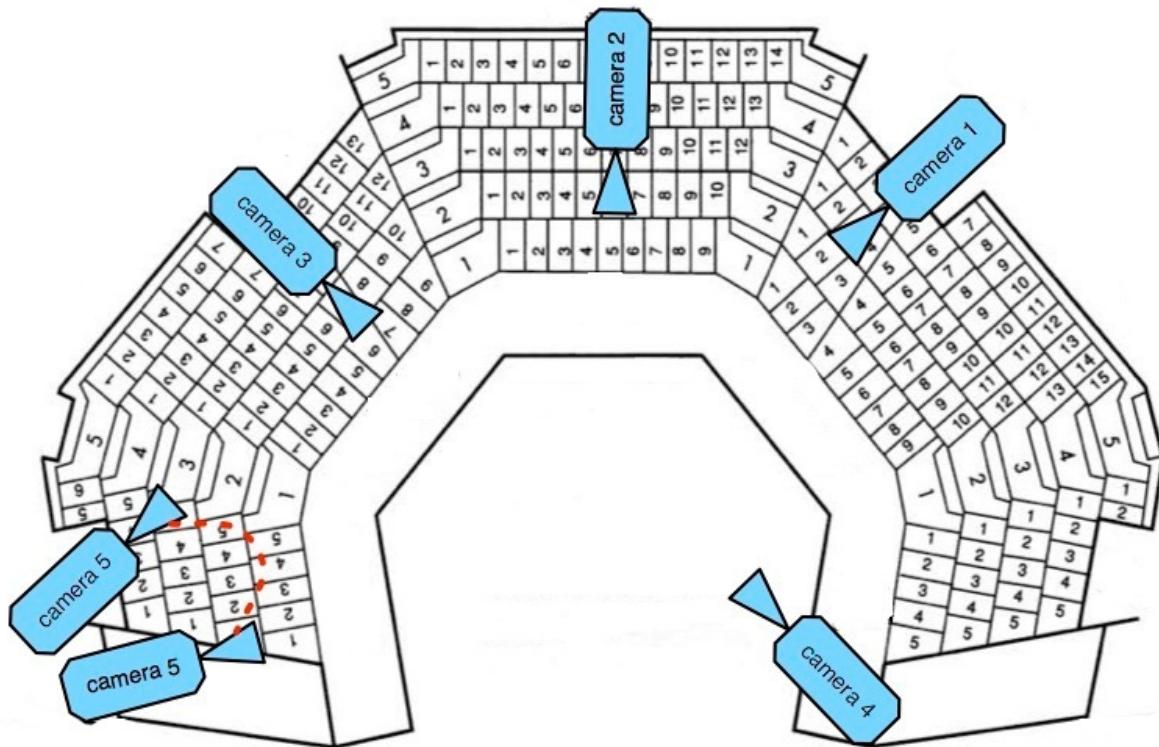
Live streaming your event is one of the best ways of expanding your live-viewing audience. It is not essential, however. Don't sacrifice too much to fit this into your budget.

Things you'll need:

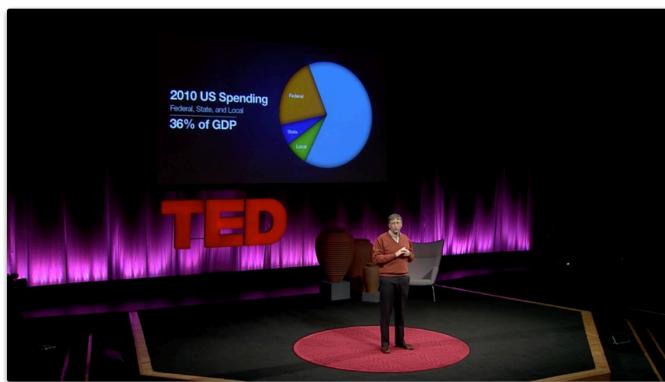
- (HD)SDI feed (like the [Livestream Broadcaster](#)) of the video switch with embedded audio.
- A robust ethernet drop (10mb), preferably dedicated to the upload.

Camera angles:

Every space is different and will require a unique camera placement. But there are a few essential shots you should attempt to execute. Here's a typical floor plan showing where we recommend placing your cameras (with an optional fifth camera described below):



Camera 1: Use this camera for long-shots with the speakers and slides when they look away from the lens and medium shots from the waist up when they look toward it:



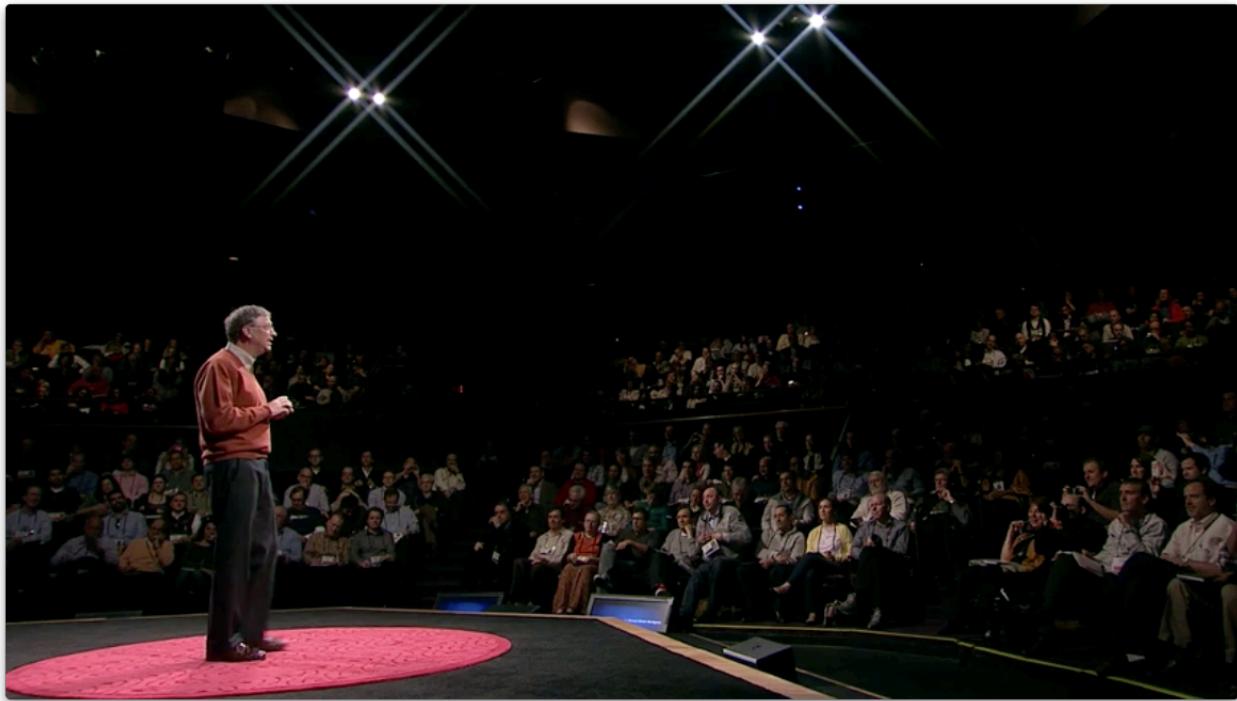
Camera 2: Dedicate camera 2 to medium shots and medium close-ups:



Camera 3: As with Camera 1, use this camera for long-shots with the speakers and slides when they look away from the lens and medium shots from the waist up when they look toward it:



Camera 4: Placed behind the speaker, dedicate this camera to capturing dynamic over-the-shoulder shots and audience close-ups:



Camera 5: If you have the budget, get a fifth camera dedicated audience reaction shots. Or have a camera operator running this camera handheld through the event. It can be extremely useful for tech demonstrations to have this camera come on stage to capture close-ups of the action:



Additional Cameras: If your budget allows, you can always add more cameras. For instance, you can place one next to Camera 2 for an extreme close up (if you do this, make sure you use film make-up -- stage make-up will look caked on). The possibilities are limitless and we encourage experimentation!

Shots to avoid:

- Profile shots – Don't shoot at exactly 180° of your speakers. It may look good through the lens, but it's not useful for editors.
- Slide mutilation – Don't frame your speaker with significant, but incomplete portions of the screen. Instead, frame the screen in full with the speaker -- as shown in Camera 1.
- Speaker decapitation – Don't frame the screen with the speaker's head floating at the bottom. Again, aim for the shots as shown in Camera 1.



Camera Movement:

- Focus – Camera crews should be more concerned with the speaker than the host. Tell your crew that the talks we post online are of the individual speakers only.
- Rehearse – Bring in your Video Director when you rehearse with your speakers to let your camera crew get to know how each presenter will move about on the stage.
- Pull out (slowly) during applause – Your wide camera and audience camera should anticipate applause and standing ovations and pull back slowly to emphasize the growing excitement in the room.

- Keep movement deliberate – Tell them to shoot as though their camera is always live -- no jerks or sudden movements. It will be essential during post-production.

Communication:

Make sure your production team has clear lines of communication. We encourage a 2 Channel Clearcom system or similar PL: one channel for the Tech Director to call lighting and presentation cues and one for the camera director to relay orders to each cameraman. This system allows for overlapping dialogue and is much more effective than walkie-talkies during the show.

Editing:

Shooting your talks is only the beginning. It is only in the editing room that all of your footage comes to life. If you've recorded a live mix, don't rely on it -- use it as a baseline and then follow these guidelines.

- Treat every talk like it is its own event – Make sure your editors know that they are not editing an entire event. They should turn each talk into a dynamic, individual article.
- Start strong – Remove opening salutations and start with the most engaging opening line possible.
- Open wide – Structure the beginning of your videos with shots that establish the space and the audience.
- The close-up is magic – With internet video, you're dealing with a very small screen. It is vital that you primarily utilize the most engaging shot you have (usually a medium-close-up that follows the speakers eye-line).
- Cut disfluencies – Remove most “umms”, “errs”, and “uhhs” but not so many that the presentation seems unnatural.
- Show the slides full-frame – Cut to full frame stills of the slides as soon as they are referenced and hold the shot for as long as it takes to appreciate each slide.
- Don't be too cutty – Pace your videos temperately. Do not cut too often.
- Create unique opening and closing title reels – We encourage you to create introductory and closing reels that are unique to your event, providing that they follow all of our branding guidelines. You **MUST** open each video with, at least, your officially licensed event logo. Your opening reel should not exceed 15 seconds.
- Lower thirds – About 20 seconds into the video. We recommend fading in two lower-third titles. The first with the speaker's name. The second with the month, year and place of filming.
- Sponsor logos – Sponsor logos may only be shown on one slide at the beginning and end of each video. This slide must be 3 seconds long at maximum and adhere to our official sponsorship slide [template](#).

There may only be a single slide in your video to feature all of your sponsor logos. Sponsor logos may not appear anywhere else in the video. If you have multiple sponsors you must

feature all of your sponsor logos on the one slide. Never superimpose your event logo or a sponsor logo over the speaker's talk or slides. Never feature rolling credits.

Slides related to sponsors must appear in the following sequence:

1. General event intro graphics
2. Your TEDx event logo
3. Sponsor pre-roll card
4. Talk
5. Sponsor post-roll card
6. General event post-roll card

The pre- and post-roll sponsor logo slides you display in your videos should use the layout of these [templates](#) (versions for 4:3 and 16:9 provided). If you are unable to edit these image files, recreate the layout in your image/slide editor of choice.

If you are featuring multiple sponsor logos, send a still image of your slide to tedxpostevent@ted.com for approval. Sponsor logos must appear smaller than your TEDx event's logo.

I can't afford all of this! What do I do?

You don't need to do everything listed in this guide to get your talks onto TED.com. Curating good speakers should, far and away, be your top priority. But even the best Talks will likely not succeed online unless you at least:

1. Make your stage look professional

You don't need anything fancy. Just get your branding in there and make sure the speaker and the screen will be visible in the videos.

2. Light your speakers well

If you can't get the standard three-point lighting set-up, make your stage evenly lit where your speaker will be standing and darker in the background. Avoid fluorescent lighting and spotlights.

3. Capture a live feed from your speaker's mic

This one is a firm requirement. You must capture audio that will be pleasant to listen to on headphones.

4. Shoot from at least two cameras

Prioritize your camera angles in the order we've listed above. Camera's 1 and 2 are essential.

5. Edit your talks

Cut to the slides as soon as they are referenced and for as long as your viewers need to look at them. Start each video with the beginning of the talk (not with lengthy introductions). And cut out any major gaffes.