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Video Captioning: A Guide

Captions play a crucial role in making video content accessible to a wider audience. They benefit individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, non-native speakers, and those in sound-off environments. By including captions, you enhance the accessibility and engagement of your social media videos, ensuring that your content reaches and resonates with all users.

Closed vs. Open Captions

- **Closed Captions:** These can be turned on or off by the viewer. They are often encoded into the video file and can be accessed through a video's settings.
- **Open Captions:** These are permanently embedded into the video and cannot be turned off. They are always visible and typically used when hosting platforms do not support closed captions.

Tips and Tricks for Captioning

1. **Be Accurate and Synchronous:**
 - Ensure that the captions match the spoken dialogue and sound effects accurately. They should appear in sync with the audio to provide a seamless viewing experience.
 - Example: If someone says, "Welcome to our annual community event," the caption should display the text simultaneously.
2. **Include Audio Descriptions:**
 - Provide descriptions for sounds and visual-only elements that are essential to understanding the video. For instance, if a character nods in agreement, the caption might read "[nods]."
 - Example: "[background music playing]" or "[door creaks open]".
3. **Avoid Visual-Only Aspects:**
 - Design videos to convey information through both visual and auditory means. This ensures that all viewers can understand the content, regardless of their sensory abilities.
 - Example: Instead of showing text on screen without narration, include a voiceover to read the text aloud.
4. **Use High Color Contrast:**
 - Ensure that captions are easily readable by using high contrast between the text color and the background. Typically, white text on a black background is a good choice.
 - Example: White text with a black outline or black box background.
5. **Positioning and Size:**

- Place captions where they do not obstruct important visuals. Avoid covering faces or key actions in the video. The bottom center of the screen is usually the best placement.
- Example: If a person is speaking at the bottom of the screen, position captions slightly higher to avoid overlap.

6. **Consistent Style and Formatting:**

- Maintain a consistent style, font, and size for captions throughout the video. This consistency helps viewers follow along without distraction.
- Example: Use a legible sans-serif font like Arial or Helvetica and keep the font size large enough to be easily read on various devices.

7. **Grammar and Punctuation:**

- Use proper grammar, punctuation, and capitalization in captions. This aids readability and comprehension.
- Example: "We're excited to announce our new project!" rather than "we're excited to announce our new project."

Example of Captioning

Video Scenario: A promotional video for a community event, featuring various speakers and background music.

Closed Caption Example:

[upbeat music playing]

Speaker 1: "Welcome to our annual community picnic!"

Speaker 2: "Join us for fun activities, great food, and live music."

[children laughing]

Speaker 1: "Don't miss out on the fun!"

Resources

- [Add captions to YouTube videos](#)
- [Add captions to Instagram videos](#)
- [Add captions to Facebook videos](#)
- [Add captions to Twitter videos](#)
- [Add captions to LinkedIn videos](#)

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