

— FIELD GUIDE № 02

The 90 seconds that get you in the room.

Done well, a short introduction video puts you in front of the hiring manager before the rest of your application has even loaded. Done badly, it confirms you weren't worth opening. Here's how to land in the first camp.

REC · 00:00 / 02:00



! A face **and** a voice, not just a CV.

• TWO MINUTES. ONE TAKE. ONE YOU.

• IF YOU CAN DO THIS, HALF THE FIELD HAS ALREADY LOST.

A two-minute introduction, in **seven stops**.

Four for what you say. Three for how it looks and sounds. Six red flags before any of it. The whole thing lands in one to two minutes.

01

The intro, as a person

02

Story № 1

03

Story № 2

04

The close, your values

05

Camera & framing

06

Light, sound, setting

07

Delivery & takes



SIX RED FLAGS

Any one of these and it lands in the no pile.



Six things that kill it instantly.

Recruiters decide whether to keep watching in the first five seconds. Any one of these in your first frame and you've already lost them. Clear all six and you're ahead of most of the field.

DON'T # 1

Filming it vertical.

Phones default to portrait. Portrait video plays on a laptop with two black bars and one tiny strip of you in the middle. It signals "I didn't think about this" before you've said hello.

✓ DO · Turn the phone sideways every single time. Landscape, 16:9, no exceptions.

DON'T # 2

Going over two minutes.

Recruiters watch dozens of these a week. At two minutes they're already mentally moving on. At ninety seconds you've left them curious. Brevity isn't about speed; it's about respect.

✓ DO · Aim for 90 seconds. Hard ceiling at 2 minutes. If it runs longer, cut, don't rush.

DON'T # 3

Reading off a visible script.

The eyes give it away. If you're scanning lines just off-camera, the viewer sees a person reading at them, not talking to them. Connection lost in three seconds.

✓ DO · Rehearse three times until you can tell it. Then put the script down and look at the lens.

DON'T # 4

Flat, no energy.

A monotone delivery reads as "I don't really want this." Even a strong script dies in a flat voice. Recruiters don't hire vibe; they hire signal, and energy is the signal of someone who actually wants the role.

✓ DO · Smile before you press record. Speak slightly louder than feels natural. Lift the last word of every line.

DON'T # 5

A dull, characterless backdrop.

Blank magnolia wall, half-shut door, empty corridor. The picture tells the viewer who you are before the audio kicks in. A backdrop with zero personality reads as a candidate with zero personality.

✓ DO · A tidy bookshelf, a piece of art, a plant, a clean kitchen with one item of interest. Something with life in it.

DON'T # 6

Looking like you rolled out of bed.

Bedhead, crumpled t-shirt, three-day stubble that wasn't intentional. The viewer sees the same effort you'd bring to day one. Personal presentation is the silent first sentence.

✓ DO · Dress how you would for the interview itself. Brush your hair. Same standard, same care.



Up to two minutes. Four moves.

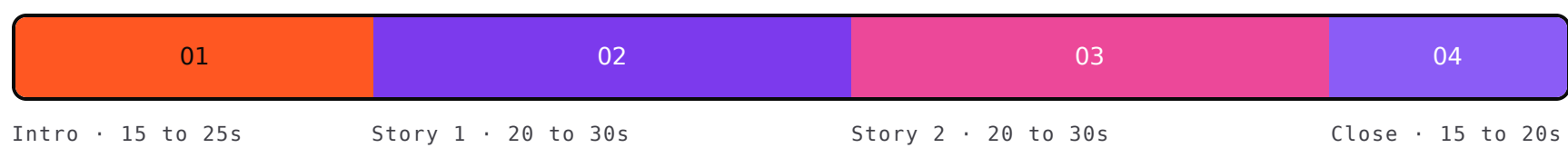


A person, then proof, then **a promise.**

The best intro videos sandwich the work between two human moments. Open by being a real person the viewer wants to know more about. Tell two short work stories in the middle. Close with what you actually stand for. The whole thing lands in 90 seconds, give or take.

THE 90-SECOND BUDGET · 1 TO 2 MINUTES TOTAL

00:00 → 02:00



15 TO 25 SEC · STOP 01. THE INTRO, AS A PERSON

Open as a human. Not a CV.

|| SAMPLE · IN YOUR OWN VOICE

"Hi, I'm *[your name]*, and I'm applying for *[role]* at *[company]*. Before I tell you what I've done, here's who I am: I came up in *[your background]*, I'm at my best when *[the conditions you do your best work in]*, and outside work I'm the one who's always *[a real, specific personal hook]*. That's the person you'd be hiring. Now here's the work."

PUT IN

- + Your name, the role, the company. Once.
- + Where you saw it. A small initiative signal.
- + One sentence on how you got here. The human origin story.
- + What energises you at work. Conditions, not corporate values.
- + One real, specific interest from outside work. The dog, the band, the garden.

LEAVE OUT

- × "I'm passionate about." Banned word.
- × An apology for sending a video.
- × Listing every job since university.
- × "I love travel and going to the gym." Be more specific.
- × Any phrase you'd put on a LinkedIn bio.

20 TO 30 SEC · STOP 02. STORY № 1

The first proof. Specific. With numbers.

|| SAMPLE · IN YOUR OWN VOICE

"First story: at *[company A]*, *[the situation in one line]*. The piece that fell to me was *[the task]*. I *[what you actually did]*, and *[what changed, with the number]*. The skill that did the work there is the one I'd bring to this role."

The four-line story. The pros call it STAR.

S

SITUATION

What was going on when you started.

T

TASK

What fell to you, specifically.

A

ACTION

What you actually did about it.

R

RESULT

What changed. With a number if you can.

PUT IN

- + Tell it as four lines: situation, task, action, result.
- + A real number. Percentage, pounds, time saved, churn cut.
- + Name the company. It anchors the story.
- + Tie it back to the role: this is what I'd bring.

LEAVE OUT

- × "I'm a strong communicator." Show, don't claim.
- × Jargon nobody outside your last firm knows.
- × Vague verbs: "helped", "supported", "worked on".
- × A second story. Save it for Stop 03.

20 TO 30 SEC · STOP 03. STORY № 2

A different muscle. Different angle.

|| SAMPLE · IN YOUR OWN VOICE

"Second one, different angle: at *[company B]*, *[a different kind of situation]*. I *[what you did differently this time]*, and within *[time]* *[the outcome, with a number]*. That's the other side of how I work."

PUT IN

- + Same four-line structure. Different skill on display.
- + Pick a story that shows a different muscle to Story № 1.
- + A number, a time-frame, or a measurable change.
- + One line on why this story matters for this role.

LEAVE OUT

- × A near-duplicate of Story № 1. Pick something different.
- × An anecdote with no result attached.
- × Anything older than seven or eight years.
- × A third story. Two is the cap.

15 TO 20 SEC · STOP 04. THE CLOSE, YOUR VALUES

Close on what you'd bring. Not what you want.

|| SAMPLE · IN YOUR OWN VOICE

"Whoever joins your team, you want someone who *[the value you actually live by, in your own words]*, who *[a second value, again in plain English]*, and who *[a third one if it's true]*. That's me, on a good day and a bad one. CV's attached, free to chat any time next week. Either way, good luck with shortlisting."

PUT IN

- + Two or three values stated as actions, not nouns. "Tells the truth when it's awkward", not "honesty".
- + Frame them as what you'd *bring*, not what you *are*.
- + A low-pressure call to action. CV attached, free to chat.
- + Wishing them well with the rest of the process.

LEAVE OUT

- × "I'm a team player." Banned. Show it in the stories above.
- × A list of five abstract value-words. Pick two, in plain English.
- × "I look forward to hearing from you." Sounds desperate.
- × "My skills align perfectly with your needs." Lazy.



PART TWO · HOW IT LOOKS AND SOUNDS

Make the picture as good as the script.

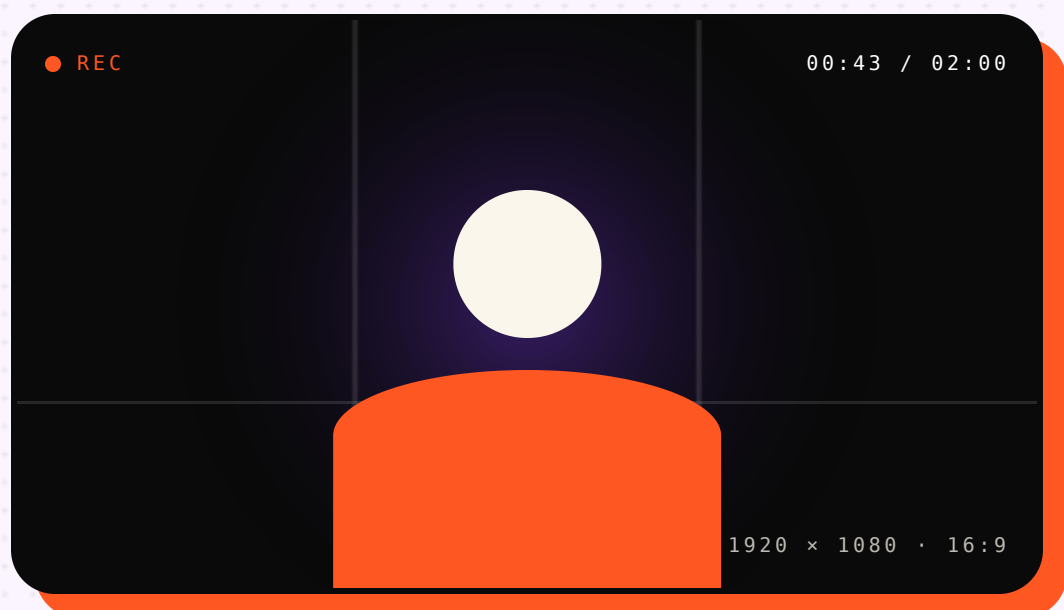


05 STOP FIVE. CAMERA & FRAMING

A stable shot.

Centred. In focus.

The basics of the picture. A locked-off camera, a sensible resolution, and a frame you've actually thought about will already put you ahead of most of the field.



Five rules for the frame

- **Stable**: tripod, mini-tripod, or a stack of books. Anything that means the picture doesn't wobble.
- **Landscape**: 16:9, always. Turn the phone sideways before you start.
- **1080p min**: If the option is there, use it. 720p is a fallback, not a default.
- **Eye level**: The lens at the height of your eyes. Not looking up your nose. Not down at the top of your head.
- **Look at the lens**: Not at yourself on screen. Cover the preview with a sticky note if it helps.



Three things people forget.

Picture, sound, and what's behind you. Get any one of these badly wrong and the script can't save you.



LIGHT

Face the window.

Soft, natural light coming from **in front of you**. A window during the day is ideal. A desk lamp aimed at your face works too.

Never sit with a window or bright light **behind you**. The camera will give up and turn you into a silhouette.

★ *If you wear glasses, drop the lamp slightly above eye-line so the reflection misses the lens.*



SOUND

Quiet room. Door shut.

Bad sound kills more videos than bad picture. Choose the quietest room in the house. Shut doors and windows. Put the phone on silent **in another room**.

If you have headphones with a mic, use them. Otherwise the phone's own mic is fine. Just get close enough.

★ *Listen back on headphones, not the laptop speakers. You'll catch the buzz you didn't notice while recording.*



SETTING

A wall is a wall.

Plain wall. Tidy bookshelf: anything that isn't an unmade bed, the kitchen mid-cook, or the back of your bathroom door.

Dress how you'd dress for the interview: same standard, same level of effort. No coffee stains on the collar.

★ *Wider shoulders than the frame edges read as professional. Tight crops around the face read as caught off-guard.*



Rehearsed enough to be **natural**.

The line between under-prepared and over-rehearsed is real: under, you fumble: over, you sound like a hostage video. The sweet spot is three takes.



Three takes is the sweet spot.

Take one shakes the nerves out. **Take two** is usually the one with the best energy. **Take three** tightens whatever take two left loose. Past three you start losing the spark: if take five is better than take two, your script needs cutting, not your delivery.

02:00
HARD CEILING

Ninety seconds is the sweet spot.

One to two minutes total. Inside that window, you've left them curious; outside it, you've lost them. Ninety seconds is the figure to aim for. If the script runs long, cut a sentence, then another. Recruiters don't reward thoroughness in a video. They reward respect for their time.



END THE PLAYBOOK

Now press record.

Write the script. Read it aloud three times. Set the room, the light, the camera. Then close the script and tell the story straight to the lens. The point isn't to be perfect. The point is to be unmistakably you, in ninety seconds.



Field Guide № 02 · *The 90 seconds that get you in the room.* A practical guide to producing a one to two minute introduction video that earns the call-back. Issued for candidates working with Shout.

REF RELATED FIELD GUIDES

- FG-01 The CV that gets read
- FG-02 **The 90 seconds that get you in the room**
- FG-03 LinkedIn, properly
- FG-04 Interview preparation