

How to Video Your Horse for Online Auctions

By Cathy Jennings

Selling your horse at an online auction? A good video (or two) will be crucial to your success. We have seen hundreds of videos, both great and not so great, and we will try to pass on what we have learned.

1. A good video is a MUST. No matter how you try, it is hard to convince someone to purchase a horse when all they have to go on is a picture or a bad video. However, to sell your horse online, and get a fair price you MUST have a video, so it is important to do it right.
2. Market to your audience. Think of this video as an advertising to sell your horse. What you would want to see if you were the buyer? If you are selling a made hunter, you must show it going over a course, and it must look quiet and easy, and if it has changes, it must do them both ways. If you are selling a made pony, you should show that pony being ridden by a child. Videos of ponies with adult riders do not market the pony well, unless it is a very green pony. Do not ride in training tack unless it is a very young or very green horse.
3. Have a nice place to video. Make sure the footing is good, and be sure and look around before you start your videoing. Maybe you need to remove the tractor or the manure spreader that is in view. Pick the spot in your arena that has the best view and the most attractive background. At our house, I have the choice of a beautiful pasture with trees, or the back of our house! I use the pasture.
4. Be aware of the lighting. If you video into the sun, you will get a glare. It is best to video on overcast days, or in the evenings. If you are videoing indoors, during the day, if there are open doors, it will create a major glare. It's best to shut the doors and use artificial lighting, or video in the evening.
5. Use a tripod or monopod. Very few people have a steady enough hand to make a good video without the rest of us feeling a little drunk. It is very distracting to have to try to evaluate a horse if the camera keeps jumping around. It will look much more

professional if you invest in a tripod. Be careful about using the zoom too much. Practice with it before you do the video.

6. Prepare your horse before the video. Before videoing, your horse needs to be prepared as if it were going to a horse show, or about to be shown to a customer, because of course, it is!! To hundreds of customers! I have bought many, many horses, and one of my pet peeves is when I go to look at a horse, and the seller pulls the horse out of the stall and says "I'm showing him to you fresh", and then the horse acts fresh and doesn't present himself well. I would rather the seller show me a prepared horse, and then tell me how he prepared it. Have your horse and rider spotless before the video. The rider does not need to be in show clothes, but be in neat, clean, professional clothing.
7. Accentuate the positive. If your horse is a gorgeous mover and an average jumper, show him hacking in the first part of the video. The reverse would hold true if he is a great jumper and an average mover. Show his best features first.
8. Keep the first video short. No more than 5-7 minutes, showing the horse at his specific job. It is difficult to hold a buyer's attention for more than that. They don't necessarily want to see round after round. A couple of good ones, and a hack, or watching a dressage horse at all gaits is all they need.
9. Make the second video more comprehensive, still keeping it at no more than 10 minutes. Show the horse in every-day life. Video the horse being groomed, saddled, etc. Walking in and out of the stall. Loading and unloading from a horse trailer. Pick up his feet. Anything you can think of that might make someone want to own your horse!

Online horse auctions are becoming more and more the accepted way to purchase and sell horses. As a seller, you must provide as much information as possible, to create a level of comfort for the buyer that allows him to make the commitment to buy your horse. A crucial part of that process is the video advertisement that will help create interest in your horse.