

# How to Communicate and Engage with clients using Video – with Tim Kovoov

**Susan Heaton-Wright** 00:02

Hello, everybody, this is Susan Heaton-Wright and Nick Simon from superstar communicator. Thank you very much for tuning in today. This podcast superstar communicate it is all about spoken communication in business situations. And today, we are delighted to have a very, very special guests called Tim Kavoov. I hope I pronounced that correctly. Yes, cool. Who he's really, really interesting. And actually, he won the come on a podcast prize that I had for my birthday. Tim is based in London, but he has lived and worked cross culturally, and multi lingually around the world. And communication is a longtime passion. Tim is now a keen part of the growth team, a tech company quench connecting the world's top experts with companies and their employees through video learning and consulting services. So welcome.

**Tim Kovoov** 01:18

Thank you so much. And it's a pleasure to be with you both on this amazing live stream.

**Susan Heaton-Wright** 01:24

Thank you. It's the way forward isn't it?

**Tim Kovoov** 01:28

It really is. And I really enjoy participating in these events, and also engaging with them online, on LinkedIn, and on YouTube and elsewhere.

**Susan Heaton-Wright** 01:38

Now, one of the things about superstar communicator podcasts is that you've got an oldie like me a Gen X, who has had to take on tech, and Nick Simon, who has had tech all his life. How about you, Tim, have you grown up with tech?

**Tim Kovoov** 01:59

Well, that's a really interesting question, Susan. And I appreciate the diversity of generations on this episode. Because, for me, as a member of the millennial generation, as we're known, we saw the advent of the Internet growing up as as children. So I remember I got my first email when I was about eight or nine years old, we had a dial up modem that had 14 kilobits per second speed, which was very speedy back in those days. And we witnessed the growth of broadband, and instant messaging, social media, video, and now we're entering into the world of AI and virtual reality and beyond. So it's been a really exciting time to grow up. So I think our generation has had a unique opportunity there. What do you have

**Nick Simon** 02:50

I? Well, I was growing up with the start of Facebook, I remember, my parents were saying I wasn't allowed a Facebook account until I was 13. So it was that kind of thing. It was just a starting up thing. But yeah, it's interesting to see how you were right at the start of it. When I'm not, I don't know, the Internet was kind of, you'd have to wait 10 or 15 minutes for a single page to load, outside of that I was playing around with Tamagotchis and that kind of thing. In my young age, but I'd been I think, maybe just a step closer to the more rounded internet we have now.

**Susan Heaton-Wright 03:40**

You said that you have worked cross culturally and multilingual around the world. I'm very intrigued as to where you've worked.

**Tim Kovoov 03:51**

Yes, I'd be I'd be happy to share a bit about that. So yes, there's a difference, as you said, between living crosscultural and then living, multilingually but there's often a very strong overlap, because every language has its own culture, depending on the context. I mean, even English, if you're speaking English, in London, versus maybe speaking English in Newcastle, or if you're speaking English, in Singapore, or in India, where my family originally from, there's all sorts of different considerations. So I've spent a lot of my early childhood travelling around the world. I was born in India, got to experience all sorts of cultures and languages. And then I spent a lot of my 20s working across Sub Saharan Africa and also in a number of different Asian countries working in international development, and not not for profit work in general. So a lot of that has involved speaking in second or third languages, or actually in some of these fourth languages, and being able to decide For the cultural cues, and the ways in which things are done, as much as the way in which things are said, if that makes sense.

**Susan Heaton-Wright 05:10**

It does make sense. And from a point of view of creating online video, for the World as your company does that, throughout the world, what sorts of things could you should you consider if you're doing a video.

**Tim Kovoov 05:30**

So, really video is, as we know, a very, very personable medium. So it's, you know, completely irrelevant to this podcast and to the work that you do, Susan, because it's all about that person to person interaction, proximity. And, you know, when, when we see another person, parts of our brain, the mirror neurons and the the way in which our neurology is wired is to recognise a person and to experience an interaction. So video is an amazing opportunity to do that with the voice, with body language with presence, which I know you and your brand, really focus on a lot. So I think, on some level, it's no different to having a conversation with another human being. But on the second level, we're talking about a medium which transcends time zones, geography, you have the ability to edit. So it's not bound to a live format, although the live video format is very strong as we're doing at the moment. But there are a lot more variables that can really enhance or change the dynamic of communication, which are important to think about.

**Nick Simon 06:51**

And if I can add to that, how do you find the language barrier? When it comes to that kind of international content? How does the language barrier differ between the internet and real life?

**Tim Kovoov** 07:09

That's interesting. So when it comes to that, cross cultural element, again, it's very, very important to understand your audience. So that's crucial. And as a subject matter expert, you might know your content inside out, but your audience may not. And they may have different understandings than you with regard to cultural cues context. So as much as it is knowing your subject matter expertise, it's very important to know the audience as always, but in particular with these cross cultural communications. And again, you've got a an asymmetry, when you are delivering to a room, perhaps you can get feedback from the room, you understand how people are responding. When you're having a conversation with someone, of course, empathy kicks in our personal cues, body language, and so on, are there to read the room and to understand the interactions. But when it comes to pre recorded video, for example, you are going in on some level blind, but that can be mitigated. When you begin to understand where your audiences from, again, you have some cultural appreciation, you perhaps have done some background research, had some previous conversations with either members of your loyal audience or your target audience to the kind of people that are listening, and you're able to then try and add in some of that empathy, front loaded before you have the conversation.

**Susan Heaton-Wright** 08:42

Now I've had people contact me to say that they can create videos from AI What are your thoughts about the current situation with the AI video for training?

**Tim Kovoov** 08:58

That is a really interesting conversation, Susan, and one that is very timely. And in fact, over the weekend, I was having a conversation with a technologist that's using a whole workflow to go from ideation to script writing to visual production to video production, or using AI. Now, in theory, there is a flow of workflow to do this, but it's always important to us, what's the job to be done here? Is it the mass production of more content? Or is it connecting meaningfully and offering a high value proposition to a specific person or a specific audience? And if you have a person in mind, it's generally very important that a person is overseeing or behind the delivery of that. Now, that's not to say, AI cannot be very useful in that flow. But I don't think at least at the moment, we are in a place issue where we were saying, AI is going to take over the human ability to connect on a person to person level. And in fact, I don't think that's ever going to be the case. Even as things get more sophisticated, there will always be a very, very strong role for that human delivery. So if we're talking about, perhaps using AI to create video assets, and so on, well, there are very sophisticated ways, and it will continue to get more sophisticated. But I think it will always be very important for a human to at least be the liaison and at least the editorial sense check for anything that's going out. And furthermore, the high value of having an expert who's actually speaking to camera or delivering alongside any AI augmented content, that will not disappear, and in fact, that will only become higher value as AI becomes cheaper in terms of the volume. So it's a very timely one and a very complex one, I think.

**Susan Heaton-Wright** 11:04

What do you think, Nick?

11:07

And it's concerning, but at the same time? Yeah, I definitely think I'm doing a film composition degree. And there's nothing that essentially you can replace, because of the artistic element of film writing is similar to communication. It's highly instinctual. As much as it is formulaic. So you can't take away the instinctual part, an AI isn't going to know what works and what doesn't, from a kind of emotional point of view, which is why it might take 1000 years before AI will be able to do that kind of thing. But yeah, it's Yeah, from our perspective, it's kind of a concern, but it also isn't.

**Susan Heaton-Wright** 11:59

Absolutely. Do you think it's the case that AI can enhance communication, but we've still got to remember the human element.

**Tim Kovoov** 12:11

I think that's a perfect summary, Susan, because I was actually going to ask you, your position on that and your thoughts. But I think what you've just said, they're so valuable, because we're talking about AI serving us and not as serving AI at the end of the day, AI should always be a way in which human value is created by humans to other humans. And it's actually interesting to the point where we were actually seeing AI, being used by AI to create tools as well. So it's, it's not even humans using AI, it's kind of AI to AI interactions also happening. And there are some funny things online where a tweet is being responded to by an AI and they realise that they both don't realise they're both AI is actually having a conversation. So some funny things that are happening in the world. But when it comes to us as human beings, I think what Nick said is really valuable at the moment, these machine learning models are based on statistical inference. And so they're not coming up with unique creative thought. They're not moral agents. They're not don't have this creative impulse and instinct, as you said, Nick, there is something where they can do inference and helpful in cleverly used pattern recognition to to create output. But when it comes to that human creative instinct, they're not there yet. So it's very, very important for humans to be the originator of that creative impulse.

**Susan Heaton-Wright** 13:44

Sorry, Nick, did you want to say just agreeing, okay. What do you mean by online video content? Do you mean, you know, somebody streaming them playing? Playing a game, which I know some people do? Or do you mean content like this, or content that is specific to a learning platform? What do you mean?

**Tim Kovoov** 14:11

Yes, I mean, that the field of video content is vast. And on one hand, we have live streams, say on the subject of communication like this, on others, you might have people streaming them playing a certain game, and you find that on Twitch and other platforms. And that's incredibly valuable. For those loyal audiences that really want to follow, say somebody playing a particular Call of Duty game, or whatever it is, I'm not a big gamer, but I know lots of people are. In our world, we're talking about video content for professional development. And that can be a combination of both live cohort learning. So it's people on a call zoom kind of setup. But really, when it comes to being scalable, and on demand, we're talking

about pre recorded video content. And, and that's where the challenges of maintaining a sense of presence and connection with the audience.

**Susan Heaton-Wright 15:09**

Now, I'm aware that there's somebody who's watching, if you want to say who introduce yourself. And if you've got any questions, please feel free to ask questions, because that's why we want to make it live. So Nick, do you have any questions?

**Nick Simon 15:26**

Yes. So, in your experience, how do you see people transitioning from being a subject matter expert, to an expert communicator on this subject?

**Tim Kovoov 15:38**

You know, Nick, that's a really, really interesting question. And I think that this will help a lot of people out there who are wondering how they take their expertise, and turn it into something that's scalable and on demand through video content. And not even just video content, any manner of communication that requires them to translate their expertise to a wider audience. So I think, firstly, practice, practice is a huge thing for any skill you're developing. And practice does not mean getting it right the first time, as, as we've all learnt from probably lots of growing experiences, which are not always the most comfortable once. And in my experience, when it comes to learning any skill, it's a case of beginning with small steps, and then incrementally pushing yourself out of your comfort zone, and get feedback along the way. So for example, when it comes to practising practising speaking and presenting, perhaps it's a case of initially recording a short video of yourself, delivering something to camera. And this could be a script that you've pre prepared. And then perhaps you want to share that with a close group of colleagues or peers, those that you respect and trust, and who you would feel comfortable getting some constructive feedback from. And you can also work with a coach, you can work with a trainer to help do that, who's a professional, who's seasoned and helping people to master this communication skills. And, Susan, you would certainly be one of those people. So I think that's, that's maybe a first step, the next step might be thinking about thinking about offering your service in a in a lecture or a speaking event. And again, this could be a low key, you know, Lunch and Learn type of event that you do with colleagues, where the bar is not so high that you're sitting in front of an audience of 10,000 people, but perhaps it's a group of 10 people, and you're doing it in a more informal setting. And again, set the bar at a place that feels appropriate, where you're not going to feel like a nervous wreck. But where you feel a bit of a stretch, a bit of a challenge. And crucially, you're going to be able to get some more feedback from people who, again, can see your expertise as a subject matter experts, expert, but will also be able to give you some helpful pointers about how you have done in communicating that to people that would not have that expertise.

**Susan Heaton-Wright 18:25**

That's brilliant set of tips. We've got a message from John masters. Thank you very much for tuning in John. And he says, Hi, everyone, after producing 100 videos, I'm still learning sometimes does not feel natural. Do you have any comments to make about that?

**Tim Kovoov 18:50**

I mean, John is spot on with this because that you may have done this 100 times as in the case of John, but there may still be this residual feeling of Hold on. This doesn't come naturally to me. And actually, even after doing it 1000 times there may still be a sense of something here requires a bit of effort to get over that initial hump. But I think as John would say, once you've got into that, you then begin to find a bit of a flow. And it's almost a case of pushing yourself into the place of discomfort that you continually grow. And as you continue to grow you your standard and your ambitions increase. So if you're matching that along the way you're going to, you're going to continuously go on a path of disc uncomfortable growth, as I like to call it.

**Susan Heaton-Wright 19:43**

I think there's a lot of talk about, staying in your comfort zone, and I've got what's it called my brains gone. It's me not being well. The impulse syndrome, when you sort of look back and you think, oh my goodness, I don't look as good as Nick and Tim, here. But actually, you've hit the nail on the head of all of these things that sometimes you need to push your comfort so that you can grow and get better.

**Tim Kovoov 20:19**

Well, that's, that's a brilliant insight, Susan, and I wonder how you would respond to interact with Jon's thought there?

**Susan Heaton-Wright 20:26**

Well, it's interesting, because I think first of all, when we see ourselves on video, it's all a bit of a shock, isn't it? Because we don't see us. That's not how we see ourselves, we certainly don't hear ourselves that way. Because we can hear ourselves inside our heads. And the recording equipment that we use, is going to sound different to that. I don't sound like that when I'm on video. You know, they're all of those question marks aren't there. And sometimes, you've just got to keep going, no one died from doing a video. Absolutely,

**Nick Simon 21:08**

then I edit these as well. So it's almost like hearing someone else. Especially when I'm myself speaking. It's, you know, so we're the situation that you just have to power through. There's a lot of situations with my degree where you show pieces of music that you're not so sure about, but you have to, you have to do it, because otherwise you'll never get used to doing it. So I think it's the same case of videos, you have to watch them through, and kind of just push yourself through to rewatch and think about, okay, that kind of thing worked and that didn't. So it's yeah, it's just a case of pushing very.

**Susan Heaton-Wright 21:52**

I do have a sort of technique that I learnt about self evaluation, and maybe I'll do one. And and John, you sort of made me think that maybe this is a masterclass to do on one occasion about just focusing on one or two things that you are going to try and improve each time rather than this great big, long list that I don't do that, right. Don't do that. And that's not very good. And you're overwhelmed rather than celebrating what you've achieved so far. And why I'll focus on this to be even better next time. Totally. But John says, it's very strange to watch yourself. I say that every day. So I've got a question for you, Tim. Some of us may have done lots of public speaking, or have led trainings, but are new to being recording for video. How do you prepare for that step?



**Tim Kovoov** 22:58

Again, a really timely question for anyone thinking about this new world of online communication and video delivery. So even if you've done it 100 times before to a live audience, preparing for being recorded for video is slightly different from that live context. And I'm gonna give you a few key tips on this one. Oh, great, just just to make sure that we cover some of the fundamentals. So the first one is pretty obvious, but familiarise yourself with the equipment. And it's, I can see you're laughing because it's, it's almost obvious. But we've all been in a situation where we've been about to go onto a live stream, or we've been about to record something, and then something has gone wrong. And we think I have no idea what's just happened. If only I had familiarised myself with the setup beforehand, then perhaps that could have been avoided. And that's a great learning lesson for any of us. I don't know if there was any reason that you were laughing at that one, particularly Susan.

**Susan Heaton-Wright** 24:04

Well, it seems almost too obvious, doesn't it? That's why one of the reasons why I asked people to come 15 minutes early, just so that we, understand this platform, but that certainly

24:19

I appreciated the the early invite as well. So we could iron that out. And especially if you're new to video recording, take some time to understand how does it look when you set up your camera and the shot? What's your background? Like? Where is your microphone? Is the microphone picking up? The right sound is your you know sometimes when we record with people in our studios, perhaps the microphone is in the line of the hair and so their hair is Hitting the microphone and you have some interference. Or perhaps the camera is not quite picking up the full shot, and it's cutting off a bit of your head. Or you know, perhaps the lighting means that half of your face is obscured by shadows, and you look more like a villain character, then a speaker. So simple things. But when you do that, it really helps to kind of do a basic hygiene check to ensure that you feel comfortable, and helps with a confidence before then delivering. The second tip that is again, similar, a bit of pre preparation is around, think about what you want to wear, think about how you sit, because these are, you know, common sense things, but again, put you in the right frame of mind, they'll perhaps set the tone of the engagement, how people view you how people understand you and your brand. And so that kind of appropriate dress or appropriate posture helps to create focus. And I've been on live television before and on TV on the BBC and things like that. And they always make sure that you are not wearing clothing that might strobe for example, you know, with fine pattern, avoid distracting sort of logos or really noisy things. Because often times those will distract from your message. And you don't want to be known as the person wearing the outrageously coloured clashing outfit, you want to be known for your expertise. And of course, that also applies to normal speaking when you're not at the camera. And that the third thing I'd say is practice your delivery. And, you know, unlike a live presentation, you have the opportunity to do multiple takes, excuse me, for example, you know, my cough there, if it was a video that was pre recorded, we could edit out that little cough. So again, if you are not happy with one take, you can redo it. If you are conscious about maybe arming and hiring, or you're conscious that you might have stuttered a little bit, have a moment to breathe, reset yourself and redeliver the line. And you know, then that the final take will include a clear presentation. Of course, it's still important to practice delivery beforehand, so that you can ensure you're communicating clearly and effectively. But some of the pressure of the live

delivery is gone. Because you're not thinking and panicking. Am I going to scuff my line? And am I going to say the wrong word, because if you do, you can just go back and do it again.

**Susan Heaton-Wright** 27:54

What fantastic tips there. There's a local lot to go away with. And I know my assistant, Nicole will love these, because she'll be doing some tips tomorrow to share with people.

**Tim Kovoov** 28:08

That's fantastic. I'm glad that those will be useful.

**Susan Heaton-Wright** 28:11

Nick, do you have any other questions?

**Nick Simon** 28:15

Yeah. When it comes to pre recorded video content, how do you maintain maintain a sense of being present? And in the room with people who may be watching anywhere in the world at any time?

**Susan Heaton-Wright** 28:30

Oh,

**Tim Kovoov** 28:31

hmm. You've touched on something interesting there, Nick, which is we're not bounded by time, space time zones, cultures, wherever somebody has an internet connection, the screen and the will to watch you. They could be doing so. So what is presence look like when you're not bounded by time of space? Well, a few considerations on this are how do you create that rapport? And again, I know Susan, this is something that you teach and you share with through the work that you do. One of the key points is speaking directly to the person that you're engaging with. In a in a live call. Of course, it's different because we're having a chat between us. And so there's a back and forth, and we know the way in which conversation has been directed, but when it's recorded, and it's to camera, you have to speak directly to the camera. And it's important to make eye contact and it's important to speak as if you are speaking to a particular person. I think, Susan, you're nodding in agreement there because that's a great way of visualising us humans are not very good with the abstract ways of thinking about communication. We'd much rather think concretely about talking to a specific person, so perhaps you're visualising Emily on the other end of the line or maybe if you're talking to somebody in Dubai, perhaps you're speaking to, you know, Fatima, which is a common name in that area, and you're thinking, they're there, they're listening to me. They're trying to understand how this fits with their life and their professional goals. And you're trying to build empathy into that delivery. So that really, really helps enhance connection, engagement, and hopefully the value that the audience is ultimately going to be getting out of it. The second point is, use conversational language. Again, it doesn't matter if you are a highly niche, subject matter expert, or professor, if you're using language that your audience does not relate to, it's very hard to maintain interest, presence. So talk is if you're talking to somebody, use a language that's natural use language that you would use with your peers. Avoid using jargon or overly technical language that might distance you from your audience, if that's not something they used to. And I've got two others if I can share. The third one is use visual aids if you can, you know, serve



example, maybe I'm maybe I'm telling you a story about a notebook. Well, if I've got a notebook in my hand, I can, you know, if I'm talking about journaling, maybe have a journal in my hand. And that just gives you a contextual cue that allows people to see and we all know that what you see and how you hear something is often more important than the words that you use that to your advantage. Maybe you have a visual aid, maybe you have slides, graphics, if it's an interview, you know, make sure that the other person is in shot. And when they start talking, perhaps you have a second camera that shows them that helps to maintain the engagement, it breaks up the monotonous kind of one person talking to a camera. And it allows the audience to feel like they're in the room with you. And the final point is Be authentic. That is, without question. The number one tip, I'd say to anyone thinking about communication, especially when it comes to video, share personal anecdotes, share experiences that demonstrate your passion and your personality as a human and not as a robot robot. So going back to the AI thing, what different Yeah, definitely. We've got personalities, we've got lived experiences. So you know, when I share something cross culturally, I'll talk about that time I was driving through the Sahara, and I saw a sheik standing by the well, and we began to talk about this or that give detail, make it personal and pepper it with authenticity.

**Susan Heaton-Wright** 32:55

Brilliant tips there. Before we go, because I'm I'm aware that time is flying away. Could you tell us a little bit about your business quench

**Tim Kovoov** 33:07

will be a pleasure, Susan. So as we talked about at the start, we're in the video content delivery space, as well as the consulting services space for professionals looking to engage with enterprise organisations and employees that are looking to upskill. So we offer a kind of Netflix style video content, delivery, interface and experience for employees and enterprises. They are then able to engage with top experts in niche areas, depending on their demand and the needs of their business and their individual learning and development priorities. When they do that, they can then access further packages in terms of consulting coaching, learning experiences with best in class partners, whether it be consulting firms, coaches, and trainers that can really help them in areas such as sales, communication, storytelling. Perhaps it's something really nice, like how to engage social media audiences through YouTube shorts, a very topical thing for a lot of marketers, and again, you're getting a lot of value through the video, but then crucially, also through that human coaching, interactive experience,

**Susan Heaton-Wright** 34:37

and how can people contact you?

**Tim Kovoov** 34:39

So if anybody listening is wanting to see how they as an employee or their company can benefit from this kind of service? You can find our website at <http://quench.ai> and if you want to reach out to me personally, you can also do that here on LinkedIn or on my email, which is [tim@quench.ai](mailto:tim@quench.ai)

**Susan Heaton-Wright** 35:08

Brilliant. Now, I don't know about you, Nick, have you got anything that you'd like to add, Nick?

**Nick Simon** 35:15

And no, it's a really interesting, it's interesting how you use your expertise on video, essays and video communication goes internationally. Yeah.

**Susan Heaton-Wright** 35:28

Thanks. I must admit that this has been so useful and there are so many takeouts from this. I am so grateful to you, Tim, for coming on today and taking time out of your busy schedule. And please reach out to Tim because I always say that guests have given up their time to give us more knowledge. But please remember to subscribe to the superstar communicator podcast. And you will be updated when we have our next release. Thank you very much for watching. Until next time, bye bye. Thank you