

BUSINESS TECH**FOCUS ON HANDY CAMERAS**

There are plenty of video cameras that can cut corporate costs, writes Ian Grayson

JUST as notebook PCs and mobile phones have become standard business equipment, video cameras are finding their way into more companies striving for a competitive edge.

Whether the task is creating staff training materials or developing video clips for a website, having a camera on hand can reduce costs and speed the production process.

Gone are the days when complex gear and production knowledge was needed to create good quality video footage. The latest cameras offers high-quality output combined with a host of easy-to-use features.

Falling equipment prices also put video production within reach of small businesses. Customer facilities, new products and completed projects can be captured with the footage and then used to create things such as promotional DVDs and internet-based film clips.

There are many video cameras suitable for business use. The latest contenders include the following.

Kogan Full HD 1080p Camcorder
Price: \$369

IT might lack the quality build and slick styling of some competitors, but the budget-priced Kogan Full HD camcorder is an option for anyone seeking a low-cost way to shoot decent video footage.

Inside its obviously plastic case are features including a 5 x zoom lens, face recognition and image stabilisation. Video is captured in 1080p high-definition quality and stored on a standard SD memory card. You can also choose to shoot in lower-quality modes if the footage is for use on a website.

The camera has a built-in microphone that gives reasonable sound quality, but it doesn't provide an extension unit option.

Output video is stored as MOV files, which are compatible with most entry-level video editing programs, and the removable memory card make extracting files easy. For the money, this



Compact: These high-definition video cameras would appeal to the small business person on the go

is a good camera, but if you need more than basic video and sound, a higher priced alternative might be better.

Canon HF11
Price: \$1699

CANON'S latest HD video camera is a solid option for anyone seeking a good-quality unit that performs well in a variety of conditions.

Built around a 12x zoom lens, the HF11 offers variable bit rate recording, allowing a choice of image quality.

Footage is stored either in the camera's internal 32GB memory or on an inserted SD card. An 8GB version is included in the box.

All camera functions are accessed either via a series of well-placed

buttons on the body or a menu displayed on the flip-out LCD screen.

The HF 11 can be used in fully automatic mode or its focus and exposure can be tweaked manually.

In auto mode, the camera copes well in anything from bright sunlight to indoor settings. The autofocus is quick and handles fast motion.

The inbuilt microphone is sensitive and an external microphone can be attached for even better sound pick-up. The unit also takes still digital images, although the 3.1 megapixel sensor means the final size of resulting prints should be limited to about 15cm by 10cm.

The HF11 has cables that allow easy connection to a PC or TV. Output can

also be sent directly to a DVD burner.

If you're looking for a well-designed camera that produces crisp video and stills, this is worth considering.

Sony HDR-CX12
Price: \$1699

THE CX12 will deliver high-quality video in almost any light, courtesy of a 12x optical zoom lens combined with a 5.6 megapixel sensor.

Indeed, if high-grade HD video output is your key buying criterion, the CX12 is hard to beat in this price bracket.

Sony has chosen to provide access to most of the camera's functions via a touchscreen interface on a swing-out LCD screen. This works well, although

anyone with large fingers may find a little practice is required.

Manual controls are accessed via a knob on the front of the camera, but fully automatic mode produces more than acceptable image quality, for both video and still images.

An inbuilt image stabilisation capability is very good at ironing out handshake and bumps, smoothing the resulting video. It doesn't totally remove the need for a tripod but does make handheld footage more usable.

This camera will suit users seeking top-quality high-definition video in a small (370g), easy-to-use package. Stored video can be transferred to a PC over the included cable, making it easy to use while on the road.