

The Vector grow feature doesn't care for circles. My smiley face just got a little blockheaded.

As for those images that don't fare so well under Vector grow, just try to import the image at a size that would best represent its real-world usage within Camtasia Studio. After all, resizing your callout as little as possible will always yield better quality results.

Now that you've got a custom callout or two, you might be wondering how you actually add them to your project. The answer is simple: the same way that you add all your other callouts. If you take a peek now at your Callout type drop-down list, you may have a surprise in store if you scroll down a ways... yep, there's your custom callout. All the same orientation choices, callout properties, and yes, coloring options, apply to your custom callouts in addition to your regular ones. So feel free to play around to see what neat (if unintentional) effects come about as a result. Remember, if you mess things up beyond all recognition, a simple click of the **Restore Shape Defaults** button will put it all right again.



If you have a video with a lot of keyboard hotkeys or shortcuts, you may want to display those keyboard combinations on-screen at the right moment. Callouts are ideal for this. You could always use a standard text callout, but that's a tad boring. Fortunately, Alan over at [AlanWho.com](http://AlanWho.com) has released a set of high-quality keyboard icons for each and every key on a standard 104-key keyboard. He was kind enough to include PNG versions of each key so that you can import them as custom callouts. They're free to use and distribute, so I've placed them in this chapter's media folder on your disc. Enjoy!

## Transitions

If you've followed the advice in this book thus far, then your recordings have yielded a number of clips that you have then managed to slap together in Camtasia Studio and edit to your liking. As mentioned earlier in the text, trying to record everything in one take is not only a waste of time, it yields a boring result. Films and television programs are made up of multiple shots, organized into scenes, and your videos should be as well. When putting your scenes together, sometimes the

best method of introducing the new scene is simply by “cutting over” to it abruptly. Sometimes not. As with film and TV, Camtasia Studio offers fades, wipes, and even more complex ways of moving from the end of one scene to the beginning of another. These gaps are called *transitions*, and the stylistic effects you can insert during transitions can help bring your production to a new level of professionalism, provided you limit yourself to a few such effects per video (this is another one of those features that’s notoriously easy to overdo).

To **get started with transitions**, simply do the following:

- In the Task List under Edit, choose **Transitions....**  
or
- Choose **Transitions...** from the **Edit** menu.

Notice that you’re now in Storyboard view. This is the default view for adding transitions. If you started in Timeline view, you’ll be taken back there upon conclusion of your “transitioning duties.” You only need two things in order to add a transition: the clip you’re transitioning *from* and the clip you’re transitioning *to*. So, if you don’t have at least two clips present in Ye Olde Storyboard, head on back to your Clip Bin and import some more.

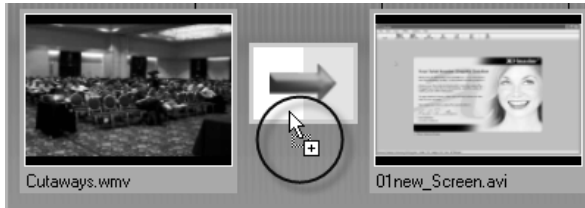
## Adding a Transition

Okay, now let’s take a look at the available transitions. You’ve got a library of 25 of them at your disposal — they’re listed in alphabetical order in the Transitions pane. To see what a given transition will look like in action, just double-click it. The Video Preview will show one still image transitioning into another. In order to see how the given transition will work with the actual content, you’ll need to add that transition to your Storyboard.

Here’s how to go about **adding a transition effect**:

1. Make sure you have at least two clips on your Storyboard.
2. Select a transition from the Transitions pane list.
3. Click and drag the chosen transition effect from the list to the small transition box that rests between your two clips.

This box represents the transition between these clips, and it looks like this:

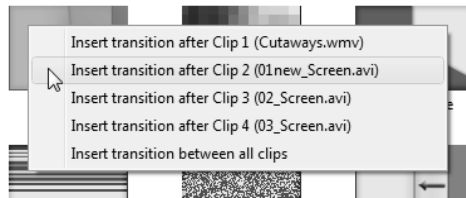


A small plus sign (+) will appear next to your mouse cursor when you drag a transition effect onto a transition box.

Release the mouse button to assign the transition effect to those clips.

or

Right-click the desired transition effect. You will receive a context menu asking where you'd like the transition effect placed:



Select your desired location by left-clicking it. The transition effect will appear in the appropriate transition box.

4. A graphical representation of the transition effect is now visible within the transition box. You can now preview the effect by clicking the **Play** button in your Video Preview. You can go back and preview your effect at any time by clicking the effect in your transition box, and then playing back the preview.
5. How was the timing of the transition? Too fast? Too slow? You can adjust the timing of your transition by right-clicking the transition effect inside the transition box and choosing a duration for the effect, from one second (quickest) to five seconds (slowest).
6. Repeat this process for other pairs of clips as desired.



If you want to adjust the default timing of your transitions, you can easily do so by choosing **Tools > Options...** and entering a new value into the Transitions default duration field on the Program tab. Any integer from 1 to 5 will work; 3 is the factory default.

## Changing Your Mind

Obviously, you are *not* stuck with your first choice if you decide it doesn't work with the content. To replace the transition effect, simply add a new one to the same spot, and it will replace the first one. Another option you have for replacing a transition is to right-click the transition box, and then select a new transition effect from the **Change Transition** submenu.

Of course, if you'd rather **delete the transition effect** entirely, you've got a couple of options for doing so:

- Select the transition effect by clicking inside the transition box. Press the **Delete** key.

or

- Right-click inside the transition box, and then choose **Remove from Storyboard**.

## A Few Parting Words about Using Transitions

Transition effects place a professional piece of eye candy between your clips, and people really seem to like them due to their “Wow!” factor. As such, the temptation may be strong to place a transition between each and every pair of clips, preferably different ones to show off all the cool effects you have at your disposal. This is a bad idea. Transitions should be used sparingly. I personally only use them when doing so communicates meaning. For example, the Radial Wipe effect is one of my personal favorites because it's reminiscent of the hands of a clock. As such, I'll often employ it between two “before and after” clips to convey the passage of time. I could give you other examples, but the bottom line is this: Never use a transition effect just because you can. Make sure there's stylistic and/or communicative intent behind your choice.

Of course, sometimes the motivation for adding a transition effect is the simple desire to cover up a mistake. Hey, it happens to me, too. I've often had multiple clips that were supposed to flow seamlessly

into one another, only to discover that the beginning of my new clip placed the mouse cursor completely on the other side of the screen. Or, I forgot to reset the location of a window or other screen object correctly, and now there's a disconcerting "jump" between clips. In cases like these, a well-placed transition effect can sometimes really come to your rescue. Other times, it's even more conspicuous than simply cutting over to the new clip and hoping people don't notice. It's always worth a try as a last resort prior to rerecording.

Keep in mind that most transitions only work well when the end of the first clip and the beginning of the second have radically different content. For transitioning between two nearly identical screens, the following transitions work well: Cube Rotate, Fade Through Black, Flip, Glow, Page Turn, Peel, Pixelate, and Roll.

Of course, do understand that all these transitions can take a serious toll on your file size, depending on the output format you've chosen. For those formats that are very forgiving of high-motion video, such as Flash FLV and QuickTime H.264, you can add a flurry of transitions without it having too large an impact on your hard drive space. For most other formats, you'll need to be a little more conservative: Go for fewer effects of shorter duration. Some transitions compress better than others, so feel free to experiment.

## Captions

---

I once had a client who wanted their training videos captioned for their hearing-impaired customers. There were approximately 10 videos, totaling roughly an hour of content. At that point, I had to implement these captions using the Callouts feature discussed earlier in this chapter. Callouts are wonderful for adding dialogue bubbles, labeled arrows, or a random graphic to your video, but using them for captioning was a terribly laborious process.

If only I'd had the Captions feature available to me at the time, I could have saved myself hours of effort and frustration. Not only are captions a terrific addition to your video content arsenal (particularly if a lot of your viewers are hearing impaired or have a low proficiency in English), but they're ridiculously easy to do. Simply add your text narration, sync the text with your audio, and you're all set up to deliver your video with glorious captions. It's not a long process, either — once you get the hang of timing out your captions, it should only take