



Succeed with Social Media

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Social Media: Producing Videos

The popularity of videos continues to skyrocket, with upwards of 800 million people watching videos on YouTube every month and more than 4 billion views per day. The numbers speak for themselves when it comes to the pervasiveness of video consumption, but what role does video content play in your business?

Videos can serve various roles in improving and promoting your company, and, with a few guidelines, video production can be relatively inexpensive and straightforward.

Deciding to Create a Video

Video content, when done well, can serve as a great asset to your marketing and brand awareness efforts. Producing videos has many advantages:

- Videos increase your search engine optimisation (SEO), and improved SEO equals better visibility in related Internet searches. Videos often appear near the top of search results and thus help increase your company's exposure to potentially interested audiences.
- Videos can reach a wide audience and are frequently shared, especially via social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. Video is also widely accessible and plays well on mobile devices.
- Video helps transform your audience from passive consumers of content to active buyers. Your videos should inspire your audience to act—by clicking the 'buy' button or going to your website to find out more.
- Videos can help existing customers use products better, engrain the brand into consumers' everyday lives and increase the number of repeat purchases through best practices and spreading brand awareness.
- Videos hold the potential to be easy and inexpensive to produce. When you're just starting to create videos, you only need basic tools—you can even shoot a video with your mobile phone's camera until you're ready to invest in bigger, more expensive video and editing equipment.

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Videos are easily shared and can reach a wide audience.

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Planning Your Video

After you've decided that producing a video is right for your company, you need to craft your plan. For each video you produce, you need to have a clear focus. Know your audience and determine what your goals and objectives are. The message in each video should be simple and clear—don't cloud your main message with too much excess information. If necessary, create a series of videos so you can focus on one main idea in each piece. Your objective when planning a video should clearly state what you want the viewer to know or do after watching the video, and then you can design the video around this message.

A good rule to follow in video creation is that it must be 1) entertaining and 2) educational or emotional in order to connect with your audience. Creating the content for your video may be the most difficult part of the process. Consider using one of the following types of video content as a way to begin the brainstorming process:

- Testimonials
- How-to
- Behind the scenes or an inside look
- Parodies of something in pop culture
- Time-lapse footage
- Live event coverage
- A story
- Best practices or tips for using your product

There are countless other ideas for different types of content for your video. As you brainstorm content, write down all the suggestions, no matter how ridiculous. Then sort through them before choosing the concept that is most appropriate for the message you wish to convey in your video.

Consider scripting the video; whether it's the questions you'll ask in an interview or the details of every camera angle and word uttered, you should have a written plan before you start filming. You should also consider the intended length of your video. Most successful videos are two minutes or less; if the video is too long, you'll lose your audience.

Producing Your Video

Once you've planned your video, you're ready to move on to the next step: filming. Master these video production basics in order to achieve a quality video that people will want to watch:

- Consider your background – a blank backdrop and the predictable and boring boardroom shots need to be eliminated from your options; be creative with outdoor scenery or an insider look at an interesting location.
- Watch the lighting – avoid harsh lights and backlighting that drowns out your subject; good lighting that highlights your subject is important to the quality and attractiveness of the video. Natural (outdoor) light is best when professional lighting isn't available.

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- Follow the rule of thirds – try placing the main subject to the side and using the other two thirds of the frame to create additional visual interest.
- Mix up the shots – follow the 80/20 rule with 80 per cent close-ups and 20 per cent wide shots as a good rule of thumb; strive for a mix of different camera angles and distances.
- Keep a steady view – consider using a tripod to make sure you're not too shaky; even a little movement can be distracting and cause a viewer to stop watching your video. There are even tripods available for smartphones.
- Listen to audio quality – bad audio often equals unwatched videos; listen for background noise before shooting and make sure you're properly picking up the audio you want. If you're filming with lower quality equipment, you may have to be fairly close to your subject in order to pick up the desired sounds. In addition, when interviewing someone, make sure you aren't speaking over each other (which can be impossible to edit out). Ask your questions and then wait for the full answer before chiming in again.

Sharing Your Video

When you're ready to post a video for the world to see, test it on a variety of devices, including mobile devices, to make sure the video loads and plays properly. You don't want to frustrate potential customers by sharing a video that they can't watch.

Most importantly, get the video out there. YouTube is the second-largest search engine, which makes it a great place to post your video. Share the video as much as possible, and post a link to each new video on all of your social media networks and your company website. Make it easy for viewers to find and share your information—place your website link in the first sentence of the video's description to make it quick and simple for viewers to navigate to your home page.

When writing the description, think about how your video fills a need that people may be searching for, whether within YouTube or in a different search engine like Google. Because YouTube is a Google product, relevant YouTube videos tend to rank high in searches, so incorporating relevant keywords in your video description can help increase its search visibility.

After posting a video, track its ability to attract views and responses. YouTube, for example, offers a free analytics and reporting tool called YouTube Analytics that details the number and frequency of views, and there are many other options available for tracking the success of your video.

Although video production might not be right for everyone, the popularity and abundance of videos available on the Internet should be good reason to consider the viability of producing video content for your company. With careful planning, a creative approach and a few basic tools, you can start creating and sharing videos in no time.

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information.**

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