
The Fundamental Guide to Video for Engineers



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Since Google's acquisition of YouTube it has gone to great lengths to make advertising on the world's biggest video sharing website both easy and customizable.

However, to date, the B2B community has been slow on the uptake. Sure enough, making a video advertisement may seem slightly left-field to many businesses more familiar with conventional display ads in trade magazines, but the future is here and it needs to be embraced.

Quality content matters!

Whilst the production values of your video do not need to be on a par with the latest Danny Boyle movie, the quality of the content does need to be carefully considered.

Like any marketing channel, great content will always attract and engage an audience so it is worth the time and effort to formulate a good idea and put together a good script rather than spending unnecessary resources on high-end equipment. Many award-winning videos have been made using a mobile phone.

Keep it short

Studies show that most online videos tend to capture a viewer's attention for just one or two minutes, so try and keep your script concise and to the point.

Longer videos such as hour-long recorded webinars and detailed demonstrations have their place in video marketing but these tend to be the exception. In the interests of being able to efficiently test and tweak your approach - especially if you are attempting your first foray into video marketing - then we would recommend keeping your initial creative efforts short and sweet!

Decide on a style

There are a number of different approaches that you can take with video marketing in terms of how you present your content. You might choose to put together a TV-like programme which features one or more presenters. Whilst this is probably one of the most challenging types of video to create, the end result can be a highly engaging show that you might wish to broadcast periodically and build up a regular audience.

One of the most common video formats (and arguably one of the easiest to produce) is the simple 'talking head' whereby a single presenter talks directly to the camera.

This can be interspersed with static images or separate video clips that help illustrate a point and maintain the viewer's interest. Free software like Apple's iMovie will do this quickly and easily.

Another style of video that is very popular is a screencast. This is essentially a video recording of your computer screen, perhaps demonstrating how a piece of software functions, together with a voiceover. You could even use this approach to record a run through of a PowerPoint presentation; again with a voiceover recording. An application such as Quicktime, for example, provides a simple way to record both your screen and audio, allowing you to capture both your presentation and your voice. This way you will need the minimum of editing.

Producing a script

Once you have decided on the style of video you are going to create, you should write a script so you know exactly what you are going to say. As mentioned at the beginning of this guide, keep it simple and short – around 1-2 minutes is recommended.

For that matter, avoid blatant sales pitches too. So, instead of just reeling off information about a wonderful new product, why not show it in action? Or, think about quick 'how-to' videos or positive reviews from customers. This type of media can also be good for teaser-type messages, building excitement to a forthcoming release.

For a 90-120 second video advertisement aim to get five or six points across using two sentences per point – easy!

In terms of delivery, the average sales director, engineer or marketing manager is rarely a natural in front of the camera. Presenting a topic on film is more difficult than it appears. The chosen presenter should offer a clear yet reassuring tone and come across naturally, without appearing wooden, uneasy, awkward or hesitant.

Relentless practice is the key to ensure complete familiarity with the script.

Consider an autocue

Keeping the message brief helps immensely as the key points can be held just below the camera in eye-shot of the presenter. Even though he or she is not looking directly into the camera lens, from a viewer perspective it is almost impossible to tell. For anything more challenging then resort to an autocue on a suitable stand. Autocue Apps for iPads, Macs and PCs are readily available, for example, which will improve video quality no end.

Using a camera

Decent video cameras are no longer expensive, making it possible to create professional videos without having to break the bank. Most video production companies operating in the B2B arena (and even some budget mainstream!) now film using DSLRs.

From a shooting perspective, arguably the first consideration is lighting as this can make or break a video's 'watchability'. Modern lighting is inexpensive and there are many online tutorials showing how to set up simple lighting rigs. Similarly, sound quality is vital – the tip here is to invest a little more in a good quality microphone and not to use the camera's own.



Video editing software

Video editing has changed significantly and is now much more accessible to people outside of the movie making industry. In most cases, relatively inexpensive editing software such as Adobe Premiere or the low-cost Adobe Premiere Elements is the best option.

However, there are a variety of other paid and free software packages available online, depending on the style of video you wish to produce; so you should be able to find an option that caters for your budget regardless of how ambitious your project is!

For example, to create a screencast type of video, all you essentially need is a screen capturing software package such as Camtasia Studio or, if you have a Mac computer then this will do the job straight out of the box using Quicktime and iMovie.

If you want to record a webinar - or deliver one live - then a dedicated service such as GoToMeeting will have the tools required to handle this and ensure a trouble-free experience.

All this still too much for you?

If all this is still too much and you don't want to spend a £2,000 on an external company, then you still have the option of automated video creation websites such as Xtranormal and Go!Animate . All you have to do is input your script and a video will be created for you ! It is really easy and you will be amazed if you type in your industry and the word Xtranormal.

www.xtranormal.com

www.goanimate.com

So You Want To Be An Electrical Engineer? 86,000 views

www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-mbDwo9xzE

PR Embargoes 254,000 views

www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBCaS-lz1_k&list=PLCF7773C167A577B6

Then of course you can go all out for a viral video and spend six month's budget!

Microsoft Viral video 6,000,000 views

www.youtube.com/watch?v=lkwh4ZaxHIA

Putting your video out there

For distribution beyond YouTube, other video hosting sites include Vimeo and Dailymotion to name but two.

www.vimeo.com

www.dailymotion.com

Videos can also be embedded on your company website, a tactic that has been known to increase visitor dwell time considerably - as well as improve first-page search engine rankings. It can also be shown that visitors who view product videos are far more inclined to buy than visitors who do not.



Conclusion

Having reviewed all of the above, we feel it is worth reiterating the all-important point that what matters most is content! Great content will attract and engage viewers, allowing them to forgive any small misgivings in production quality.

For content advice, always seek the advice of a reputable tech marketing agency – any worth their salt should be able to deliver expert guidance in this area.

Using modestly priced equipment it is today extremely simple to create compelling video content in-house, although it can command both time and effort. Video production companies have the technical know-how, but it's unlikely they will understand the business being presented. As a result, a specialist is often the best resource to support a B2B video campaign.





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