



The Challenge Of Video For Your Web Site

Background

Like most people in the business world, you have seen the beginning development of a new trend. Short videos integrated into web sites. Just as color replaced black-and-white television, videos enhance a static website. Broadband (DSL, cable modem, etc.) internet access allows faster downloads, and because of technology advances compacting video files smaller and faster to download (Flash, etc.), the internet is quickly evolving into television.

There is evidence of this trend. First, take a look at you YouTube or see Google for the millions of “online video” web sites. Second, look at the substantially declining audience size watching the limited programming on broadcast television and cable television. Third, nobody really watches television advertisements, rather we skip them.

Commercial Success Stories

When Intel introduced its vPro technology last September, it's used a ninety second online video to promote the release. “Online video has proven more effective than standard banners” says Intel.

VISA is using online video, not re-purposing their thirty-second television spots, rather producing specifically for the internet.

Sun Microsystems has been using online video for product demonstrations, interviews with executive team members, new product introductions, etc.

The New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, Forbes, Business Week, Time Magazine and Ad Age have all pointed the near future of the internet is short, custom videos.

Over the next 2-5 years short videos of one, two or three minutes will be the norm for the majority of web sites. Websites will no longer be flat, like reading the newspaper, but integrated with the sight, sounds, color, life and richness that video can offer.

The Future

This trend offers significant new marketing opportunities to business that are savvy enough to take advantage of the technology. Uses for short videos are almost too numerous to mention, but include:

New Product Introduction

Customer Testimonials

Company Overview

Product Demonstrations

Recruiting

Company Announcements

Placing videos on your website is new and exciting; however it is full of many challenges. The technologies are new and a strategy is necessary to be successful in a cost effective manner.

The following are a list of key issues that you must address in developing your video internet strategy:

1. What length should your video be? There is a tendency to immediately think of placing short movies on your web site. At this time, this will most likely prove a failure. You need to think more of television commercials. A video longer than two minutes may have a lot of good information in the video, but will the viewer on your website stay long enough to watch the video? Attention spans are short, even shorter on the internet. We have found that a good video should be no longer than two minutes. If it is two minutes or less, your odds are greatly increased that the viewer will watch your video. Another key question to think about is this a one time video?

You may want to develop a series of short videos with a theme, over time to be placed onto your web site and distributed on the internet. Once again, think television commercials.

2. Your message. You need a simple clear message, one that will fit into your short video format. Once again, companies have a tendency to make the message to long, or to complex. You need to think of a short definitive message that will have meaning for your viewer.

3. What do you want your message to accomplish? This is another key question you should ask your management in developing a strategy for your video. Is to inform your

target audience? Get them to take action? Make them feel good about your product or company?

4. The script. Developing a quality short script for your video is crucial. You may need to hire a script writer to do this. If the script is not well thought out, your video will be a failure, no matter how good it looks.

5. Once your script has been finalized you need to address the many issues of making the video (shooting your video). An experienced video professional is key. One who has industrial experience. Since there are many new capabilities to integrate power point presentations, stock video footage, music, background color, etc. into your video, significant thought needs to go into your shoot. You also have the option of Green Screen, Blue Screen or Chroma Key technology, where you shoot your video and insert the person into the background. You must also be aware of settings on your camera and what they may mean to your end video result. Specific setting is important for your video to look good for the internet. You need to think internet during our shoot. This is a somewhat different mind set that will impact your end video and it's effectiveness on the web.

Another issue to think about is who will be in your video. Will it be one of your managers or executives giving the presentation, or will hiring an actor or actress be more appropriate or necessary? This question should arise during the script development process and is one more factor that is key to your success.

6. Editing your video. Today Apple Final Cut/Final Cut Pro software used on the Macintosh PC has become the major standard editing software. However there are many issues that you must address with regard to the format of your end product video. Do you want to have your video in Real Time, QuickTime, Flash, etc? We have found that Flash is the choice we prefer because the file size is smaller and this will make it easier to manage and view your video on your web site, or e-mail your video link to interested customers, prospects or business partners. You may also need to address the issue of software to compress or convert your video. Luckily the price of many of the software tools has come down and there is a broad array of products on the market. Many of these tools are fairly new and there is even share ware that you may want to evaluate. Do some research into the tool set that will meet your needs.

7. Your final video. Now that you have edited your video you need to make some

decisions on where you will place the video on your web site and/or how will you distribute your video over the internet to your target audience. We don't believe YouTube is going to work for the business community. How many people in business have time to look at videos on YouTube? Perhaps in some consumer industries this method of distribution will work. Most likely it will not for the B to B market.

In placing your video you need to think about the size of your video. What size will be optimal for your use? Most editing software will give you a choice. You may also need a play screen for your video, depending upon the final video format. A play screen is fairly easy to create; most web developers should be able to do this. You can also purchase play screen software for a very reasonable price.

Now that you have your video on your web site, this is just the beginning. Your video can be used at trade shows, can be e-mailed or streamed to your target audience. You can incorporate your video into many areas of your marketing/sales campaign. There may be key industry specific web sites that you need to identify where you can place your video for greater exposure. You should give some thought to these questions during your strategy phase of developing your video.

Video for the internet is new and there are many unknowns. But because it is new there are many opportunities to utilize this new technology to develop a creative and exciting marketing and sales campaign that can allow you to develop and penetrate new markets and customers in a cost effective manner. The internet moves fast, don't be left behind in this major new trend.

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