

Marketing Minute ~ Ten Quick Tips to Plan, Shoot, Edit and Promote Videos

In the last issue of our newsletter, we talked about how online video has emerged as one of the best ways to get your story across to potential customers. The simple and familiar format offers a great way to reach large audiences, convey your core messages and drive traffic to your site.

Videos aren't as difficult to produce as you may think. Yes, you could spend thousands of dollars to produce a slick, professionally done video, but you can get the same core results from an inexpensive project, depending on the subject matter. With a little bit of planning, and by following a few easy steps, any organization can add video to its marketing mix without going over budget.

Here are ten quick tips to tailor video to fit your needs and GROW YOUR BUSINESS:

Tip #1: Define Your Video Goals

Before you ever pick up a camera, you must clearly define your marketing goals and objectives. What do you want this video to accomplish? Is this about driving traffic or creating a marketing funnel? What key messages are essential to convey to your audience? Some of the typical goals companies set for their videos would be: increase 'direct traffic' to the company website; educate people about a produce line; develop a brand and communicate the company's culture; build inbound links to the company's website; recruit new employees; demonstrate a diverse customer base; build credibility with testimonials; and more.

Tip #2: Determine a Type of Video

Put yourself in your customers' shoes. Think about what they're really interested in watching and what they'd find beneficial to learn about your business, product or service. Here are a few ideas: testimonial, product demo, event/conference, teamwork, tips and tricks, how-to video, or (Your Expertise) 101. After you've settled on a theme, tell a compelling story. Let your enthusiasm, pride and passion shine through. Be yourself. Use a lot of real examples.

Tip #3: Create a "Shot List" or Storyboard

Before you sit down to write a proposal or a piece of marketing collateral, you'll usually start with a few notes. For your first video, it is important to give it some structure, just like you would for any other project. Taking ten minutes to develop a "shot list" or a storyboard will help you stay on track and save you time in the long run. Think about the visual experience you want to give your customers and potential customers. Don't get bogged down with this. It is better to go with your intuition than to over-think a video. Think of: "What is the purpose of your video?" "What is your opening shot?" "How will you show your product or service?" "What is your video's call-to-action?" Keep in mind that your video should have a clear purpose, and answer the questions that your audience is thinking about when they start watching it. For example, if the title of your video is "How to clean your car in just five minutes," don't talk about your company's cleaning product for two minutes before you get to the tips.

Tip #4: Include a Clear Call-to-Action

A good call-to-action helps you target desired behavior from your viewers. Here are three key elements that will make your call-to-action effective:

- Make your call-to-action obvious and easy to remember, for instance, "Sign up at www.yourcompany.com."
- Be consistent with the behavior you want to target. Decide what you want them to do and direct them to that only.
- Create a sense of urgency. Give them specific actions to be accomplished in a set time frame, such as "Sign up by December 1st to receive a free gift."

Tip #5: Shoot Your Video Using Five Basic Rules

First, consider lighting, which is essential for a professional-looking video. Indirect light is always better than direct light. Also, look for shadows which would be created with bright, noon-time sunlight. Secondly, check the background, keep it as simple as possible so you don't distract the viewer. Your camera should only be showing what is important. Thirdly, keep your shots still, don't move your camera. When you turn on the camera, count to ten in your head and don't move the camera during those ten seconds. Then, stop the recording, move on to your next shot and repeat. Fourth, come from afar and then get close. Establish the setting, what professionals call the 'establishing shot' because it helps viewers understand where they are. If you are taping a product, shoot it as a whole, then move closer, but don't zoom. Stop recording and then get closer. Fifth is sound, perhaps the most important part of the video. Be sure to get a lot of natural sounds when doing your general shooting, but when you go to interview someone, listen for what's around. Find a quiet spot, shoot your client from the chest up and ask them to speak clearly and loudly. Keep it simple.

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Tip #6: Edit Your Video and Make It Short

Editing is a very detail-oriented process that requires creativity and skill, and has a major impact on the quality of your video. If you don't hire a professional and want to edit your own videos, the software can be a major tool. Some include iMovie (an Apple product); Windows Movie Maker (free with Windows that also produces slideshows and exports .wmv or .avi video files); Final Cut Express/Final Cut Pro (an Apple product for a professional with video editing background); and Adobe Premiere (more complex like Final Cut that integrates well with other Adobe products, such as Photoshop). One thing to always keep in mind: YOUR VIDEO SHOULD BE SHORT! We recommend that you keep your marketing videos between two and three minutes, as the majority of viewers are 'snackers'. Have your video sent them to your website for more information.

Tip #7: Optimize Your Video for Search Engines

There are two basic types of video search engine optimization (SEO) to keep in mind when posting your video:

1—Website video SEO helps engines index and rank video content that appears on your website. This type of SEO is basically to direct people to your website.

2—Video sharing SEO helps search engines discover your video assets on video aggregation and social networking sites such as YouTube, Facebook and Twitter. This type of SEO aims to increase brand awareness for your company. Keep in mind: create descriptive, clear and relevant video titles, descriptions and tags using effective keywords; create a descriptive, unique URL for each video when you post it on your website; use flash-enabled videos; consider HTML5; submit a video sitemap to Google; and keep posting new content.

Tip #8: Publish Your Video

As a marketing asset, you should publish your video in as many places as you can, such as YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter.

Tip #9: Promote Your Video and Allow Feedback

Did you know that one minute of video is as effective as 18 million words? Your video is an excellent and important content asset for your company. Here are just a few ways to use and promote your video:

- Incorporate your video in a marketing campaign or a product launch.
- Embed your video in a related blog.
- Promote your blog or website (with the video embedded)
- Also, there is a 48-hour window when videos can receive 'honors' and be featured on YouTube. Try to drive as much traffic as possible to your video within that time.

Make sure to allow your viewers to leave comments on your blog and your YouTube channel. Marketing is about interaction and exchanging ideas.

Tip #10: Measure Your Success

After you have produced, published and promoted your video, it is time to measure which channel is most effective for you and which ones need some fine-tuning. Here are some ways to measure:

- Changes in direct traffic to your website or organic search
- More 'likes' on your social media
- A/B testing of your landing pages (Send half of your traffic to a page that has images on it and the other half to one that has the video, then check conversion rates for each page.)

A few more tips:

- Create a series of videos under the same general topic, or how-to videos with different aspects.
- Try to create a plan and schedule making and publishing videos with some regularity.
- Customize YouTube for your business and create a loyal audience that comes to you for your expertise.
- Establish your company as the thought leader in your field of expertise.
- Remember to follow the ten tips every time you create one of your videos.

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