

Video Tech Close Up

How to create marketing video that's relevant, personal and engaging without breaking your budget

Ready for your close up? Powder your nose and smile for the camera, because if video isn't already a part of your content marketing strategy, it will be soon.

"Companies are investing more in video and it is becoming part of their core strategy, because you can communicate complex ideas in a simple way," says Michael Litt, CEO of Vidyard.

"The demand for video continues to increase, because everyone knows video is a great way to get your message across," adds Jeff Hirsch, CMO of Sunday Sky.

"People don't want to read a 10 page report—they'd rather absorb it by watching a video. But making that leap can be difficult in a marketer's mind," says Linda West, marketing director of Act-On, which uses video as part of its content marketing strategy. "You need to offer high value to your prospects, and offer different mechanisms for information."

"Video is a great way to communicate your brand's humanness, and get the word out in a succinct way," agrees Rob "Spider" Graham, founder and CEO of Trainingcraft LLC.

The tech needed to create compelling marketing videos continues to evolve. The good news is that as the quality of tech rises, the cost has dropped significantly.

Part of the reason behind the explosion of video is the fact that millennials are now decision makers, both in the B2B and B2C world, and they entered the workforce with email and video already being part of their everyday lives, notes Litt. When they're considering a purchase, they have no desire to talk to a salesperson early in the process. They're doing their research online themselves, looking at blogs, reviews and most importantly, video.

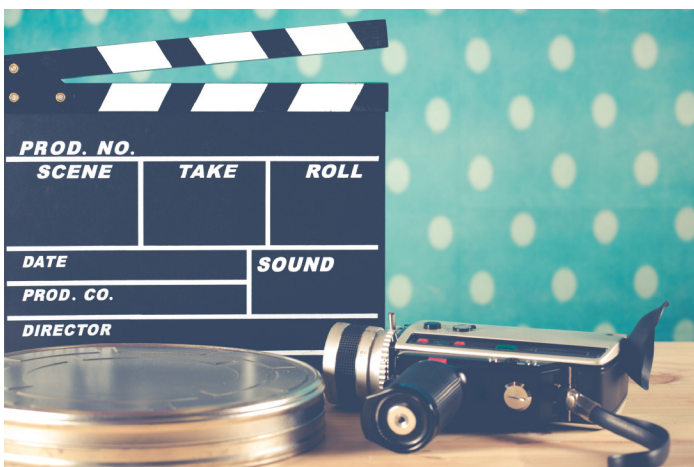
GETTING STARTED

Compelling video doesn't necessarily need Hollywood-standard production values, but it does need personality. Put out clips with static talking heads and it will just look like a moving brochure.

In the past, the biggest issues facing brands looking to add video to their marketing efforts was bandwidth and cost, notes Graham. Today, companies that want to ramp up their video efforts might only need to invest a few hundred dollars to get in the game.

The price of admission for creating winning marketing video has come down dramatically in recent years. In the 1980s, an editing suite would have set you back hundreds of thousands of dollars—and you had to hire an expert to use it. Today, you can get high-quality software for under \$100, and you prob-

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ably already have someone on staff who can do the job. Couple that with a relatively inexpensive lighting set up and even a low-cost telepromoter (so your on-camera talent can avoid looking down at a script), and you're in business.

"It's not about creating the best special effects—it's about creating something that is watchable and interesting," Graham says. "But don't just flip the camera open and start filming. Script if you need to. And rehearsal is never a bad thing.

"There are a lot of great videos out there by non-professionals that show how to solve a problem," he adds, noting that while your efforts don't need to be Oscar-caliber, you should be prepared to inform and entertain.

"You have to scrap 'Super Bowl' syndrome," agrees Litt. "People are breaking their backs investing so much in video, when what you really need to do is just get your team and your customers on camera and show the culture of your business."

Litt encourages Vidyard customers to produce content as inexpensively as possible, particularly early in the game when you're not sure what will work with your audience. He offers clients a "studio in a box," that has a tripod, lenses, a memory card and other barebones essentials to get them rolling. An easy first foray is to go to an event, film some customer testimonials and publish.

"Just about everyone has an HD video recorder in their pocket today," he says. "People are surprised to see how much professional content is produced



Act-On's videos range from lengthy training pieces to shorter funny clips, like this one comparing finding the perfect vendor to finding the perfect date.

on mobile devices. It's not as expensive as you might think."

The biggest cost, Litt notes, is often simply time from your social media or content manager's day. And, young professionals coming right out of school are often great candidates if you're looking to add a team member to create videos for you.

KEY TO COMMUNICATION

To make your video useful, make sure that it is easy for viewers to understand whatever point you're trying to get across, he says. It does no one any good if your information is factually correct but poorly presented.

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VIDEO BY THE NUMBERS

- Only 11% of marketers are solely hosting video on their own sites; 43% are using external sites like YouTube or Vimeo, and 46% are using a combination.
- Seventy percent of marketers see video as some what or very effective as a lead gen tool. But, less than 10% have integrated video viewing data with CRM or marketing automation systems.
- About half of marketers (48%) are still only looking at basic metrics like views and shares to gauge the success of their video initiatives, missing out on more advanced opportunities like drop-off rates, heat maps or sales attribution.
- Video content budgets increased for over half of marketers (53%) this year.

—Source: Demand Metric/Vidyard Video Content Marketing benchmark report



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"The goal is to inform and help," Graham notes, and that means speaking and sounding relaxed and relatable. "You can be an expert without being a snob, you can be confident without being arrogant."

While B2B and B2C marketers might have different goals with their video initiatives, it's important to remember that the end of the day they're both still communicating with people. "Any purchase can be emotional," he notes. "On the B2B side, that might translate in [gaining information] that will help someone look like a rock star to their boss."

"People are generally pretty lazy and they'll follow the path of less resistance," Graham adds with a laugh, noting that just about anyone would rather watch a simple, step by step video on how to do something, rather than wade through a long, wonky print user manual.

Marketing automation provider Act-On uses content marketing in all its marketing programs, from lead nurturing to efforts helping the sales team close deals, so moving into video was a natural progression.

Act-On had been doing a number of webinars for lead gen purposes, and started considering video as a way to optimize distribution of the library of on-demand content it had built. It turned to Vidyard to help host the content, because of how Vidyard's platform integrated with Act-On's systems.

KNOW YOUR ROI

Knowing how long someone has viewed a video is extremely valuable to a salesperson, West notes. If someone clicked on a 10-minute product demo, the company can see how long they watched the clip, and that gives the rep an idea of how interested and educated they are about Act-On's products.

"If someone watches 10% of one video, they're not as valuable a lead as someone who watched three entire videos," she says.

How much of a video these individual watched is essential. "That digital body language is important information—it gives you a context for your conversation," Vidyard's Litt adds.

Act-On creates the bulk of its videos in-house, because of the relatively low-cost to do so today (a sound room was created at the company using foam purchased from a trucking company). It has a variety of creative to connect with prospects at various points in the funnel. The 15-minute marketer series gets a viewer up to speed on a topic in a quarter of an hour, while 60 second talking head clips offer a lighter, sometimes more opinionated take to engage prospects at a high level. Product and training videos range from 30-seconds to one hour in length.

One way to offer more value in your video content is to customize it to the viewer. Of course, as with so much of marketing today, providing personalized



Atlantis uses personalized videos to welcome resort guests, highlighting attractions they'll experience, like swimming with dolphins or gourmet dining.

video experiences starts with data, Sunday Sky's Hirsch says. "Data fuels everything—to deliver a personalized video, you need to know who they are and where they are in their experience with your brand."

Brands can create personalized video via Sunday Sky's platform to help tell a story to customers, and engage them with the brand or experience. Personalization works well when it is respectful of the customer, and centered more around the experience than the person specifically.

GET PERSONAL

Atlantis uses personalized video to engage guests after they have booked a vacation. The tropical resort

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LIGHTS, CAMERAS, BARGAINS

OCEAN STATE JOB LOT USES VIDEO TO SHOWCASE THE FUN SIDE OF DISCOUNT RETAILING

Online video is helping Ocean State Job Lot connect with customers and showcase the humorous side of closeout shopping deals.

The brand has had an on-again/off-again relationship with TV, says David Sarlitto, director of marketing for the North Kingston, RI-based 117-store chain. While the quirky value oriented story of OSJL's closeout deals (bargains on everything from pool chemicals to olive oil) can play well in "moving pictures," it's hard to come up with a solid ROI because the product mix in the stores can be so transient. Great deals come in every day, and are often gone quickly, so you can't build a TV campaign around them. And, brands often don't want their availability at discount retailers advertised, because they don't want to undercut the big box stores that also carry their wares.

Inexpensive video distributed online is a huge part of the chain's future plans. Clips can be produced quickly and inexpensively, and capture the fun side of the store's eclectic product mix and character.

One spot, which also doubles as a TV ad, shows a man coming home with "just a few things" he purchased at Job Lot. The flood of items pouring out of the bag as it breaks overtakes the entire house, spilling out of the chimney.

In another, a cute hamster is shown snacking on nuts. The on-screen text asks if the little guy knows what brands are available at the store, and wonders whether he knows what great deals are to be had on his favorite treat. The ending kicker echoes a certain Honey Badger. "Hamster don't care. Hamster just likes nuts."

"With online video, we don't have to worry as much about the production values as we do with TV," says Sarlitto. "We can be more spontaneous and react faster than you can with TV."

Ocean State Job Lot worked with a west coast-based freelancer to come up with concepts in different categories and tested them this spring to see what would have an impact in the stores.

Offers were incorporated, and videos closed with an offer for a coded coupon viewers could print or download to their mobile phone.

"We left them out in the market for a set period of time, to see if we might attract a different demographic," he says. "Are these people the same folks who read print or listen to traditional radio? Of course, personally, I don't care how old or young people are as long as they make their way to an Ocean State Job Lot store."

Fifteen different promotions were created in March



Ocean State Job Lot's videos often showcase a sense of humor about the discount shopping experience.

and April, and ran through July. The features were promoted via email and online, and were made easy to find by Ocean State Job Lot fans. The email boasts over 300,000 loyal followers, who eagerly open the weekly emails to find coupons and offers. The company doesn't sell anything online, so the emails serve primarily as retail traffic drivers.

"We've made the commitment to do another round of videos," he says, noting the chain will continue to test offers and creative to see what pulls the best. "Some offers worked better than others—we could marry a wonderful video with a horrible offer. If that was the case, I don't want to blame the video."

Going forward, Ocean State Job Lot will work with its ESP and other vendors to learn more about its customer base for better targeting. For the first round of videos, no tracking codes were attached to the offers, so incremental store traffic was the best indicator. "It's hard to quantify," he notes.

The retailer's core customer base is anyone who loves a bargain—but that doesn't necessarily mean their audience has a lower income across the board.

"It's the person who is willing to cause damage to life and limb to come to a complete stop at a garage sale," says Sarlitto. "In the parking lot, you'll see a late model Mercedes next to a beat up Hyundai."

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knows what type of package someone has booked, and has lots of information to work with, such as whether they are a returning guest or part of a family, and whether they have booked experiences such as spa treatments or swimming with a dolphin.

In a welcome email, guests receive a video personalized with their name, date of arrival and the type of package they have booked, highlighting the features of their trip. "They have a strong marketing organization and they've seen great results," Hirsch says.

Other Sunday Sky customers use video to engage prospects, he says. Health or auto insurers, for example, use video to engage website visitors by giving them a personalized clip based on information they've entered when asking for a quote. "It's engaging—the first someone hears is their own name and that's compelling," he notes. "They realize that the brand is talking specifically to them."

Personalized video is easier to execute in a non-evasive way via email or in on-site videos as opposed to advertising, because the person has clearly subscribed or shared their information. "In advertising and

retargeting, you have to be careful because there's been no clear agreement to receive information."

"Real-time personalization can essentially replicate a one to one experience, even though it's really one to many," says Litt, noting that Vidyadard has been experimenting with personalization as well.

It tested a campaign last Christmas where the gift shown in the thumbnail image of a video in an email campaign had the recipient's name. At the end of the video, the gift opened up with personalized downloadable resources. "The clickthrough was beyond anything we had ever seen," he said.



Beth Negus Viveiros
 Managing Editor, Chief Marketer
 bnegus@accessintel.com
 @CMBethNegus

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