

Telling a Tale With Video

The power of using video to convey your brand story

Video accounts for 64% of all web traffic, and is projected to reach 80% by 2019, according to ReelSEO. Companies that master how to use video as a tool to share their brand story will succeed in engaging consumers and winning their business.

Consider Great Wolf Lodge, the chain of 14 indoor waterpark resorts recently debuted a series of four intimate long-form videos aimed at Millennials, exploring what it means to be a modern family.

One thing that is notable about the videos is how little branding or selling is featured. Instead, the stories that unfold get the message across on an emotional level. It's a trend in branded video that plays to the ever-evolving marketing tactics required to reach Millennial consumers, who have an innate distrust of advertising.

"It can be daunting, but confidence is gained by what led to the underlying strategy," says Chris LaScala, vice president of marketing at Great Wolf Lodge. "The idea was a direct result of the significant amount of research we executed over the last year to best under-

stand our evolving target markets, including Millennials and Latinos; the dynamics of the family travel decision-making process, and specifically how our brand is perceived. It's more authentic and organic than anything we've done in the past."

In the Great Wolf Lodge documentary video series, the triumphs and challenges of four families are showcased, from divorce and military deployment to cancer and foster care. The films explore those challenges

before the families take a trip to Great Wolf Lodge, where the backdrop of the park plays the lead branding role.

"From a messaging perspective, Millennials appreciate transparency and authenticity from brands," LaScala says. "They appreciate experiences over material goods, and they often travel with extended family or friends. We thought

the campaign would be an effective way to share some very compelling, genuine family stories wrapped in our brand. At the end of the day, the traditional nuclear family structure is more the exception than the rule. Family is much more complicated and self-defined than it has ever been."

These changing dynamics have a direct effect on every aspect of family life, including how and where



Continued on page 4

3, 2, 1—ACTION! THREE SOCIAL VIDEO BEST PRACTICES FOR DIGITAL-FIRST BRANDS

1. The Three-Second Audition

In order for a Facebook video to gain a “view,” the user has to have eyeballs on the creative for at least three seconds. Let’s call this the Three-Second Audition. In this audition the creative needs to do three things:

1. Grab the user’s attention
2. Show solid brand recognition
3. Captivate the viewer with compelling storytelling

In its social media campaign, category-leading health & beauty product Amopé hits all three marks to draw prospective buyers. Spots entitled “Fourth of July” and “Date Night” begin with feed-stopping images of anticipation—friends leaping into a pool, and makeup and dresses being selected—with a focus on feet and hands. The brand’s logo is subtle but clear. Quick cuts show home nail and foot care in action, closing with women enjoying their evenings with polished, professional results. No voice-over is required, although the company name is pronounced at the end, and the entire story is told in under 30 seconds each time.



Frames at the start of a social video must tell single-image stories.

2. Revive the Silent Film

Facebook autoplay starts every video in silence, so the Three-Second Auditions rely on vivid visuals. Viewing any of the 30 Amopé videos, there is a distinct, unique and cohesive “Behind the Heel” and “Above the Hand” point of view, with a stop motion-esque shooting style that creates a well-branded visual identity. Given that viewers may watch without sound, every frame has an expressive purpose within what becomes a branded short film.

3. Data Drives the Arc of the Story

Again, when users engage with a social campaign, it creates a fertile and valuable set of data and insights. In this way, social provides a new testing ground for effective broadcast prototyping. The key, of course, is that this isn’t a 1:1 conversion from social to TV.

The realities of social engagement dictate that social video differs fundamentally from television spots. Social is not a “go big or go home” approach. Social viewers have all the power, so the story must be well told, and have meaning, value and currency for sharing. Yet by creating multiple

social spots with high video production values, brands can easily test a wide variety of entry points and conversation starters at a lower expense than broadcast to define what will work best on bigger screens.

After the first view has been recorded and the value exchange has begun, brands can start seeing valuable metrics. From here, data-driven media tactics including retargeting, preference data and segmentation seamlessly guide interested consumers across the arc of the brand and deeper into the nuances of the product story towards goals such as intent, promotion, purchase or advocacy.

With that data in hand, brands can deliver the right messages to TV’s captured audience to maximize that one precious shot to break through clutter, user control and distractions, and to grab the viewer’s attention and project key messages. To transform a social video for TV’s densely packed and high impact “push” messaging, it’s necessary to take into careful consideration the idiosyncrasies and implications of each medium and how audiences engage with them.



Voice-over, product details and stronger brand ID help tell more of the story in broadcast, as seen on right.

Amopé took a social-first approach to test and validate their campaign via real-time customer experience learnings and successfully expanded it to television. The final spot for television built on the “Date Night” social video, for example, maintained the core anticipation and many visual elements. Transforming the message for television, then, formatting and perspective were adjusted, deeper product information and demonstrations were provided, voiceover was layered across the entire ad, and the spot was completed with a strong bookend of brand ID.

“Having a robust digital platform for Amopé has allowed us to gain invaluable information about what content resonates and drives the highest consumer engagement. This has allowed us to be agile and inform our broadcast strategy at a much quicker speed,” says Gary Rizzo, senior brand manager for Amopé.

In short, campaigns can bypass expensive guesswork, and leap ahead with creative tested in real-time and translated for the most compelling story across every screen. It’s the full, true power of social video delivering results across a marketing strategy for the agile brands of the future. —Chris Pape, founder and executive creative director, Genuine

LESSONS FROM THE TUBE

WHAT MARKETERS CAN LEARN FROM TV BROADCASTERS

Technology is your friend, but choose wisely. The latest isn't always the greatest.

Everyone is dazzled by new tech. TV producers and broadcasters will tell you that they take all this hype with a large pinch of salt. Savvy broadcast buyers rely on a careful mix of peer-to-peer endorsements and very detailed buying procedures that minimize the chance of getting stuck down a technological dead end. As we know, for every leap forward, there are always technology #fails. Remember Google Wave or the VHS vs. Betamax war? What about Blu-ray vs. HD-DVD?

It's important to keep an eye on the future. In the last decade or so, television has gone through some monumental shifts that were largely invisible to the average viewer. Around five years ago, TV producers and broadcasters were encouraged to abandon their tried and true tape-based processes for recording and storing video in favor of a file-based system for managing, moving and storing video content. At that moment, cameras were transformed, tape was dead, and computers suddenly became best friends with video. The good news for video marketers is that file-based workflows are here to stay and we no longer have to splice videotapes or devote a warehouse to store our content.

Don't buy when you can rent.

There has been a massive transformation in consumer and business purchasing habits. No longer do we feel the need to own the music we listen to, the television shows we watch or even the software that powers our business. The same has become true in TV. High-end camera rental has been around for years and TV companies are now starting to lease on-premise equipment and subscribe to the software services they need. This covers them for maintenance and upgrades, as well as offering the flexibility to switch to a better product if it becomes available. It also massively helps when trying to justify the ROI of a video project. The lesson here is not to get stuck with antiquated equipment or software. Choose something that is as agile as you want your business to be.



Empower remote teams and make the most of your talent, wherever they might be.

As technology marches on, offices and teams are spreading out. Thanks to tech like

Skype and Joinme, it's almost unusual to have everyone in the same place at the same time for meetings. For broadcasters needing to collaborate with big video files, the cost of shipping hard drives via FedEx as well as the cost of

employees waiting before they can start work negatively effects the business. Add different time zones to the mix and we have another evil for remote teams. Broadcasters are increasingly using "the cloud" as a way to centralize files that everyone can access regardless of where they may be.

Collaboration, review and approval all need to happen regardless of physical location and the device in your hand. Make sure your video marketing plans don't force you to compromise your process for working together and getting sign-off regardless of where people in your organization may be.

Have a plan for collaboration and don't abandon your review process.

Video files can be huge—and are getting bigger all the time, which means we'll not be sending them over email for the foreseeable future. While FTP and other file sharing services can work, the free ones are really slow, painful to use, and not very secure. The expensive systems tend to treat all files agnostically, so not very good for handling video and collaborating with a team.

Marketing groups have processes in place for marking up Word docs and PDFs and getting that content edited, reviewed and approved. The last thing we want is to abandon those just because we're working with video.

Maybe you're even working with Google docs and enjoy simultaneous collaboration on the same document? I can still remember the thrill of doing that for the first time. Is that possible with video? Can you attach a comment directly to a precise moment just like you can to a line of text? Can other people see you type that comment? Yes, you can! Having the ability to add comments that can instantly be seen by an editor is where geographic barriers get smashed and no one is left waiting to do their part. Of course some people will miss their water cooler chats.

Cloud-based services, built for the particular demands of video exist today and it's one of the topics discussed in the TV industry today.

Harness the power of metadata in video.

Metadata (data about data) is the glue that keeps the often-crazy world of video together for broadcasters.

Put simply, video metadata helps people search, find, archive, and restore video content. Metadata can be automatically added at source, like camera type, date of filming, location (GPS co-ordinates), timecode (time of day or from zero), and file format. Metadata can also be added manually with information like the producer's name, the name of the campaign, and even a transcript. Timecode is particularly useful to locate specific moments and add comments or summaries about the content.

Metadata in video marketing is the descriptive text that can also play an important part in SEO and other metrics. Make metadata work for you by attaching important words and links to your video, so that when it gets posted, all the accompanying info is there to help it rise in the rankings and get seen—*David Peto, CEO, Aframe*

TWO STEPS TO INCORPORATE VIDEO ACROSS THE BUYING CYCLE

In the race to develop video content, remember to have a strategy in place that is mapped to your buying cycle and includes your production partner's expertise. Ultimately, these steps will keep you on course and progressing toward your goals for the long-term win. Your video content will reflect quality, come together faster and require less budget with these steps in practice.

Step 1: Map your buying cycle to pinpoint where video makes sense.

- Make a chart of your industry's buying cycle
- List what types of content are relevant to each stage
- From those topics, define what content types would make great video content

Here is an example of a well-balanced buying cycle chart to get you started in the right direction. Once you have identified your video "wish list," identify where buyers will be looking for this type of information to inform how you distribute it.



Step 2: Work with your production partner to develop a program that maximizes the video production budget.

- Review your existing video and photography assets, content calendar and buying cycle chart with your partner. Discuss the objectives of your content program and how you want to measure video performance upfront. Highlight the calls to action that will be guiding prospects to the next stage.
- Talk about planning for quality, quantity and consistency. Things like templates for video case studies, a brand graphics package, asset quality guidelines and script outlines are tricks of the trade you need to take advantage of to get your video content program off the ground. These tools create strong collaboration and project efficiency. They also build consistency in brand voice.
- Discuss how to bring your story to life using motion graphics and animation. They can fill gaps in your asset library, expand your video distribution possibilities and help to explain complex topics or processes. —*Jessica Melhorn, director of client solutions, JPL*

Continued from page 1

families vacation.

And of course, Millennials are also avid users of mobile and love watching video on those devices. Four in five Millennials like the convenience of watching video on mobile versus other devices and 95% watch videos at least once per week on their mobiles, according to a study conducted last fall by Yahoo & Millward Brown. Videos uploaded to YouTube alone last December generated more than 60 billion views.

The Great Wolf videos, produced by Hill Holliday, live at www.greatwolf.com/stories and on YouTube. Some elements will be repurposed for TV spots and social media plays an important role in viral share. Radio, digital and print also support the campaign. Future plans include producing more family stories, featuring both guests as well as employees, and soliciting and sharing user-generated content."

"We still maintain a healthy amount of more product-driven content in our marketing mix to carry the freight when it comes to quick, compelling communication of the brand experience," says LaScala.

"We put Great Wolf Lodge in the backdrop and let the families be in the forefront, which took a lot of trust from Great Wolf Lodge," says Lawson Clarke, creative director at Hill Holliday. "But in the end it makes for more engaging content. You watch because it's engaging and something you see in your own family. You see a family go on vacation and you see everything in the park but you haven't been sold it."

Influencers, including mommy bloggers, will play an important role as word-of-mouth drives most purchases. Women in general spend more time looking at things like comments and reviews before making their decisions, according to eMarketer. And 62% of Millennials surveyed by NewsCred agreed that, "the content they read and see online—on websites, social media, in the news—from a company makes them feel more connected and loyal to the brand."

"The strategy around storytelling is not to sell, but rather to tell stories, authentically and with credibility as a way to entertain," Lawson says. "If people feel something genuine, it gets passed around.!"



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