



VIDEO MARKETING: DON'T BLINK OR YOU'LL MISS IT

2013

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What comes to your mind when you hear the date February 14th? Cupid? Hearts? Valentine's Day? All logical thoughts, but this was also a very important date in the online marketing world. On February 14th 2005, the domain www.youtube.com was activated and the world of video marketing was soon to be born.

April 23, 2005 was the day a video was first uploaded to YouTube. Entitled, *Me At The Zoo*, the video shows YouTube co-founder Jawed Karim at the San Diego Zoo. The video can still be viewed on the site, along with millions of other video footage. How much to be exact? According to YouTube, 48 hours worth of video clips are uploaded every minute, resulting in nearly 8 years of content uploaded every single day.

So as business owners, why is it so important for us to pay attention to YouTube? To answer this question, let's take a look at some quick facts:¹

- YouTube receives more than 1 billion unique users each month
- Over 4 billion hours of video are watched each month on YouTube
- YouTube is localized in 53 countries and across 61 languages
- YouTube is the second largest search engine next to Google
- In 2011, YouTube had more than 1 Trillion views (around 140 views for every person on Earth)

Those stats are great for YouTube, but what about you, the business owner? How exactly does this help you increase your ROI, or drive traffic to your website and store? Well, videos can be used in multiple ways. They can be used to showcase your products and services, help customers make a buying decision, improve your search engine rankings, and build brand affinity.

In fact, a video makes it 53 times more likely that you'll get a front page Google result. Videos also have a 41% higher click through rate in search results than plain text and consumers are 64-85% more likely to purchase a product or service after watching a video.²

Before delving into the details of how you can get your video found in search, or how to ensure it helps improve your conversions, let's start from the beginning and understand the key fundamentals of building videos.

Creating Your First Video

Before you go out there and start blatantly advertising your products and services, telling the world why they should be doing business with you or buying your stuff, here is a fact that might be a little hard for you to digest. People don't like being advertised to. When given the option to fast forward a commercial, they most likely would. So if your video itself is turning into a commercial, chances are people will not want to watch it.

A good example to follow is Tom Dickson, the founder of Blendtec, or as he is more popularly known, the *Will It Blend?* guy.³ Tom's company makes blenders. Now Tom could have easily created a series of videos on YouTube stating his blender is the best in the world and every home in America should have one in their kitchen. Tom could have gone on to say how he is giving such a great price on his blender that you would have to be insane to turn down the offer. But Tom didn't do that. Neither should you.

Instead, Blendtec created a video series called *Will It Blend?* where Tom would attempt to blend various unusual items in order to show off the power of his blender. Items included everything from cell phones, golf balls, marbles, an iPad, a six foot garden rake and even a Justin Bieber action figure.

So what was the point of this? Well now Tom has over 500,000 subscribers that tell him what they would like him to blend in his next video. The video blending an iPad alone has over 15 million views. He has since been featured on major mainstream media outlets such as The Today Show, The Tonight Show, The History Channel and the Wall Street Journal. Not only are his videos entertaining, they are showing his viewers the power of his blender in a creative manner instead of an in-your-face sales pitch.

Okay, so you might not be in an industry as exciting as Tom's where you can use your product in a unique way to capture millions of views. Does that mean you should throw video out of your marketing strategy? Absolutely not. Not all successful videos are funny or viral. If you are able to answer a viewer's question, that can be a valuable video which helps them make a buying decision. So let's assume you are a real estate agent. You can start creating a series of videos of common questions that you might get asked.

Topics such as:

- How to pick a real estate agent
- What to do before selling your home
- How do I know what my home is worth?
- Do I need a home inspection on every home I consider?
- Should I buy or sell first?

This way, you are creating content that your target audience is seeking information on. You can use the Google Keyword Research Tool (<https://adwords.google.com/KeywordTool>) and Google Uber Suggest (ubersuggest.org) to determine what questions people are typing into the search engines to help build your video content. Although you are not directly advertising for your services, you are providing valuable information that positions you as a leading expert on that topic. Keep in mind that at the end of the video there is nothing wrong with saying "For more information please contact us at" and include your business name, website, email, phone number or any other way you might want your viewers to follow-up with you.

Let's explore some best practices for creating your first video.

Things to Keep in Mind

Before shooting your video, there are a few guidelines that can help prepare you for a successful campaign. Use the following checklist when preparing for your first video:

Shorter Is Better. According to a study conducted by Wistia: "The average 30-second video was viewed 85% of the way through, while the average 2-minute video was viewed on average 50% of the way through."⁴

You might be able to sit for hours watching a video about your product or service – but chances are most people will not. So keep your videos short and to the point. Typically, if you are able to get your message across in 30 seconds or less – you will keep the audience engaged for the entire video. If you are creating a "How To" video, or any "Informational"

video, those videos are expected to be longer so the 30 second rule will not apply. There are many factors to consider, but aim to keep even these types of videos under 3 minutes.

Throw Away Your Crappy Camera. Most cameras these days are high definition and are relatively affordable. But even with a high definition camera, if the user has to strain to hear the audio because of background noise, or if they are leaning in towards their monitor trying to make out what exactly they are looking at because of lighting or because you look pixilated – you need to redo your video. Remember, not all video has to be film quality production with three point lighting, a tripod and a green screen. A simple flip camera will do well with the right lighting, stability and an engaging delivery of the video's message.

Don't Forget Your Call To Action. As mentioned earlier, don't forget to leave the last few frames of your video with your call to action – whether you want users to come back to your website or to pick up the phone and call you. You want to make sure this part of your video stays on screen long enough for viewers to actually take action. If you already had the video produced and this segment was too short, you can use the 'Pause' annotation inside YouTube Video Editor which will pause the video at that frame.

Also, don't forget to include your calls to action in the description section of the video. This will allow viewers to easily click on a link and be taken to your landing page or website.

Ask Users to Subscribe and Like Your Video. Just as the title says, ask users to subscribe and like your videos. The next time you upload a video to your YouTube channel, your subscribers will receive a notification and have a higher potential of seeing your video on the homepage of their screen when they are signed in. This means your videos will get more exposure.

Keep it Natural. Not everyone is comfortable in front of a camera. One of the best techniques is to pretend you are actually speaking to a customer. Be natural and informative and you will see results.

Get Your Video Found

Now that your video is produced, it's time to share it with the world. There are a few things you can do to ensure your videos get the most exposure.

Embed Video on Your Website. This is the simplest thing you can do to get video traffic. Leverage the existing traffic already coming to your website and embed your video directly onto your landing pages.

Share via Social. If your brand is on any social network such as Facebook, Twitter, Google+, or LinkedIn, share your video link on those profiles. This will immediately bring traffic from your fans and followers.

Email Blast. If you have an email database, perhaps your next email newsletter can contain your video. Don't forget to encourage people to share the video as well.

Video Ads. You can pay for your videos to appear as sponsored ads in YouTube when people conduct a search. There are several types of Video Ads, and depending on the type of video you have created will help determine what the best ad format for your campaign is. For example, a popular way to advertise is pre-roll ads. This is when viewers are first shown a video ad prior to the video they intended to watch. Usually within the first 5 seconds they are given the option to SKIP

AD. So this means if you are investing in pre-rolls, you want to make sure the first 5 seconds of your video is what engages people so they will decide to watch the rest even though they didn't have intentions to and are given an option to skip.

Search Engine Optimization. We mentioned earlier that a video makes it 53 times more likely that you will get a front page Google result. In fact, videos are one of the quickest ways to get onto page one of Google for your search terms. So how exactly can you increase the probability that your video appears on page one of Google for your search term?

Follow these five steps below:

1. **Filename.** Before you upload the video to YouTube, ensure the filename of the video contains your keyword phrase or what the video is actually about. For example if your video is about real estate tips, the filename of your actual video should be RealEstateTips.avi (or any acceptable video format extension).
2. **Meta Tags.** When you upload a video to YouTube, you are able to give your video a title, Description and Tag to help YouTube understand what your video is about. Ensure you include your keyword phrases in all three sections.
3. **Social Bookmarking.** Submit your video to social sites such as Digg, Delicious, StumbleUpon, and +1. This will let the search engines know your video is popular and is being shared across multiple platforms.
4. **Syndication.** Although we are focusing on YouTube, let's not forget the other video sharing websites out there. Submit your video to Dailymotion, MetaCafe, Revver, Blip.TV, etc. This will again let the search engines know your video is travelling across different video sharing websites which increases the likelihood of your video ranking organically in search.
5. **Video Script.** This is not a factor that is taken into consideration yet, but soon YouTube will actually be looking at the content inside your video as they translate the dialogue. They will check to see how many times your keyword phrase appears. Where does it appear – at the beginning of the video where it is likely to be perceived as more important? Or at the end of the video which is indicating it may not be as important?

Brand Reputation Management

Another way videos can be leveraged is building video testimonials. Getting customers of your product or service to submit video testimonials will increase your brand reputation and conversions. Video testimonials create more impact than written testimonials as they touch people visually and emotionally and are less likely to be perceived as "fake" by owners or employees of the brand. These videos will build and increase your credibility.

So how exactly do you get your die hard and loyal customers to submit video testimonials? The easiest way is to ask them. It sounds simple but it's the truth and it works. You can also think of other creative ways such as running a contest that involves users submitting a testimonial to enter. Or you can use incentives to encourage participants.

Building video testimonials will also help you rank organically in Google when people search for your company name or your company name + reviews. It is so important for your brand to dominate the top listings of the search engine results page for these search terms, so include video marketing in your online strategy.

Creating a Viral Video

Evolution of Dance, Charlie Bit My Finger, David After The Dentist, Gangnam Style, The Harlem Shake, Sneezing Panda, Dramatic Chipmunk, Dancing Baby, Talking Baby – what do all of these videos have in common? Chances are you heard of at least one of these videos in this list and that's because all of these videos went viral on the Internet.

A viral video is a video where the information or subject matter is shared repeatedly via social media, email, and word of mouth.

Wouldn't it be nice if the marketing video that you have produced for your brand also went viral? Well, before you sit back and start counting the millions of views your video is going to receive overnight, let's take a look at some factors.

A Viral Video is a Viral Video. All of the videos in the list above were created and published without the intention of being viral and collecting millions of views.

So although it would be nice to plan and create a viral video, it is not always that straight forward and most agencies will tell you that you can't plan to create a viral video.

Do I Need To Have A Cat In My Video? Not all videos need to be funny, have pets, or celebrities in order for it to be viral. What about the tragic story of Amanda Todd, a 15 year old who committed suicide but created a YouTube video prior to telling the story of years of bullying she had experienced? In less than a month that video received over 1.5 million views. Or how about the video to stop Joseph Kony, the leader of the Lord's Resistance Army? In fact, that video became the most viral video in history with over 34,000,000 views on the first date it was uploaded. As of April 1st 2013, the video has been viewed more than 97,000,000 times.

So What Can I Do? We mentioned earlier you can't plan to create a viral video. Well, that is not 100% entirely true. There are ways you can increase your chances of success. Here are some tips:

In your niche market, try to think of the biggest problem or the most common question and then answer it. The key is to be specific. If you go too broad and start answering questions like 'how to lose weight' or 'how to get more traffic', the probability of your video becoming successful becomes slim. Think more in terms of:

Reduce belly fat with this 5 minute workout while sitting at your desk

Cut your Facebook costs by 45% with one click of a button

Don't just rely on one video to go viral. Create as many as you can. The more videos you have in your library, the greater the chance ONE of them might just get picked up and go viral. Some of the most subscribed channels on YouTube had to create hundreds of videos before they even had followers that started paying attention to them.

Measuring Results

Like any of your marketing efforts, it is very important to measure results so you can determine how to improve your campaigns, reduce your costs and increase your ROI. You can use YouTube analytics to determine the performance of your videos and gain a deep understanding of your content, audience and strategies that will further improve your campaigns. These are some key metrics and performance indicators you should pay attention to when looking at these reports:

Views. Total views for the selected data range.

Estimated Minutes Watched. Estimated total minutes of viewing time of your video(s) from your audience.

Traffic Source. How your video is being found.

Demographics and Geographic. Who is watching your video and the location from which they are viewing it.

Audience Retention. Your videos ability to retain its audience.

Lights...Camera...Action

If you are not investing into video marketing in your digital marketing strategy, there are just so many opportunities you are missing out on. Videos can be used to increase your search engine rankings, improve conversions on your website, reinforce credibility through testimonials, add engagement to your social channels, build your brand affinity and most importantly, provide a useful way for your audience to absorb information about your product, brand or service in the 21st century. Not only are videos relatively simple and cost effective to create but they can also be a lot of fun. So be creative, test different ideas and start engaging your audience through video marketing.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Baltej Gill is a search engine, social media and mobile marketing specialist at WSI as well as Vice President of M3 Social Mindz, one of the world's leading Internet marketing companies.

Graduating from a technical background in computer science, Baltej has over six years of experience in training and educating marketers and organizations on how to leverage Internet marketing in their business.

He has held many Internet marketing workshops internationally and trained Digital Marketing Consultants on subjects such as search engine optimization, conversion architecture, social media, mobile marketing and web analytics.

NOTES

1. www.youtube.com
2. www.bigcommerce.com
3. www.youtube.com/Blendtec
4. <http://wistia.com>