



5 Steps to Writing a Video Marketing Plan

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Everyone knows video ranks near the top of the integrated marketing lists for companies today, right along with having a website that functions well on mobile, search engine optimization (SEO) and social media and email strategies.

But there's one big problem with video marketing plans: few companies have one.

Most Companies Lack Effective Video Strategy

Ascend2 and Research Partners recently did a study* of some 280 companies worldwide on the subject of Video Marketing Strategy. The findings revealed the top obstacle to video marketing success (constituting nearly half the companies surveyed) was "lack of an effective video strategy."

In the 20+ years I've been making videos for B2B and B2C companies, I can testify that this is typical. In fact, I've found more than 50 percent of the time companies go to the expense of having good videos made, then fail to follow through in the many excellent ways they could optimize their effectiveness and ROI.

Why?

It Isn't Rocket Science, But Takes a Commitment to ROI

I think part of failure is that marketing departments (or in smaller companies the person tasked with overseeing marketing) are wearing so many hats they don't feel they have the bandwidth to execute and manage a video strategy.

O.K., but putting your latest video on YouTube and porting it to your website does not a video strategy make. Those two efforts unsupported by other intelligent action are unlikely to deliver an optimal number of views, website visits and demonstrable value.

If you have excellent videos, and they are properly placed on your website (*see the list below*) you will get some return on your investment. However, there is so much more you can accomplish with a little extra foresight and worthwhile effort.

* <http://ascend2.com/home/latest-report/>

Everything Starts With a Good Strategy

Just as you wouldn't think of conducting business without some kind of business and marketing plans, you are unwise not to have a separate video marketing plan.

We have written many video marketing plans with clients over the years, and those, generally are the clients who have gotten the most bang for their buck with video.

I say written "with" clients, because it's a partnership. You know your customers, products and services better than anybody else, and video marketing experts know the ins and outs of video marketing better.

In most cases, a video strategy runs between a dozen and 25 pages, depending on the size of your company, the number and types of personas (customers/audiences) targeted, the number of videos being produced and marketed, and the length of time for which the plan is expected to be in force.

Each of the items below contains specific types of questions you will want to answer to achieve the kind of traction and conversions that you were hoping for.

Here is a shortened overview of the elements of a proper video strategy, in five major areas:

1. Goals & Objectives

A proper video marketing plan must be careful to map to your broader business and marketing plans, and many other factors. The first order of business though is to clearly outline what you want to accomplish by making the videos.

You will want to identify the specific intended audience or audiences, and the outcome you wish to achieve by addressing those people. Is it (the most common goal) to raise brand awareness? Or perhaps it's to drive website traffic. You might desire to educate people about your products or the need for your services. You might want to establish thought leadership. You may even want to increase conversions and sales. Whatever the case, while one video can satisfy a couple of these goals simultaneously, it won't be as effective if you don't get the other steps right.

2. Topics/Video Styles

Different types of videos serve different types of business functions. Are you trying to support sales, corporate events, webinars, HR, internal communications, partner communications? Are you launching a product or line extension? Are you doing a corporate overview/introduction? A case study? Live-streaming? Doing a TV or web spot? Making training videos?

Don't try to cram too many purposes into one video. Short (generally two to three minutes max) and focused is the rule. The message (major takeaway) of your video requires a whole other process, dependent on your overarching business and marketing goals, and the purpose and desired outcome of the content.

3. Distribution and Promotion

Not all video distribution channels are right for all companies, products and audiences. Among the decisions you must make is which platforms, besides YouTube and your corporate website, are appropriate for your situation and audiences.

Most B2B companies are wise to promote their videos on LinkedIn, for instance. But are Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram, Stumble Upon or Reddit right for you? Is appropriate for your company to be represented in those places? Are your audiences there?

Are you going to make key bloggers and the media aware of your videos? Are you placing the video on BrightTalk and Slide Share? Are your videos going to be on multiple pages of your website? In your blogs? In outbound email campaigns?

Whether these things make sense depends on your overall business and marketing needs, your audience, and sometimes your market space. Don't forget to look at what you are doing from an SEO perspective to make sure your videos will be found on the web.

4. Conversion and Optimization

If your goal is attracting prospects into a sales funnel? Qualifying leads and driving action toward conversion? These are just a few angels to determine. You might also contemplate many other options. For instance:

Is there a low or high barrier to entry? Is the content "snackable?" Are there calls-to-action or interactivity in the video frame? Are you going to A/B test content to improve results? Are you tracking the video results through your CRM? Is there a registration gate? Maybe there's a Web form to fill out (where you harvest data). Is it appropriate to drive people to a deeper resource page? Do you need live chat, or free demos or trials?

Other ways to increase effectiveness comes through a diverse range of tactics, such as multi-channel campaigns. You may relate the video to a whitepaper, or case study. It may also be fruitful to tie the video to company event, or other calendar-specific event.

5. Performance Metrics

Finally, as everyone in marketing knows, if something is worth doing it's worth tracking. With video you are prudent to look at abandonment rates and the length of viewing times, where people went online directly after the video they just watched. You'll want to know how many videos people watched. The overall click-through rate. You may even be able to do lead scoring and determine the cost of your tactics. Whatever you do, however, leave some small budget and mindshare for course correction. You will want to improve your results, and be well informed, to be able to make better, more effective videos in the future.

While you don't have to do everything listed above, you need a sound plan to decide exactly what is appropriate for your situation.

Why not choose to be thrilled with the results of those videos you spend so much time and money creating? If you plan first and follow through you will be glad you did.