

MARKETING WITH VIDEO: BEST PRACTICES FOR ENGAGEMENT, IMPACT, AND RETURN

For marketers, content continues to reign supreme. In fact, this year saw the rise in investment and creation of all forms of content marketing—including print, blogs, email, video, virtual events, webinars, white papers, podcasts and e-zines. All told, marketers spent an estimated \$43.9 billion on custom content production and distribution in 2013, up 9.2% from 2012 (Custom Content Council, April 2013).

Content Marketing is the leading focus for marketers this year, ahead of SEO, email, and even social media (eMarketer, Feb 2013). But the lines between content marketing, social media, and SEO are starting to blur, as savvy marketers recognize that compelling content fuels social media mentions, driving greater organic traffic to brand websites. For leading marketers, strategies that combine content marketing and social media are quickly becoming standard.

Fueling Social Media

Content is the fuel of the social web. Nearly one-quarter of all tweets and posts to Facebook walls include content, and with good reason (AOL & Nielsen, April 2011). Posts with video and images drive 30X more sharing than posts with text alone (McKinsey, 2012). But while engaging content has long been distributed via social media, we're now witnessing a shift in intent: 81% of marketers say they now create content *explicitly for use in social media*.

The Power of Video

Video is among the best formats for generating social media sharing and organic traffic—and marketers have taken note. The majority (62%) now use video in their content marketing efforts, with 57% planning to increase use video to a greater extent in the coming year (Custom Content Council, 2013.)

Sight, sound, and motion, or “sisomo,” as famed Saatchi & Saatchi executive Kevin Roberts coined, is a reality of today's internet. With the majority of internet users now connecting via broadband, “Media companies stampede online and consumers settle back to enjoy the best of sisomo – the engagement of television, the interactivity of online and... innovation from both.”

Video's lure is emotional and immediate. As Roberts writes, “[online video creates] the emotional tug of a soap opera in a handful of heartbeats. Sisomo is the fastest way to engage people to think with their hearts and feel with their brains. Sisomo takes the magic of storytelling straight to the heart.”

“Video has been the fastest and most consistently growing medium for content marketing,” says Lori Rosen, Executive Director of the Custom Content Council. “Branded video is closing in on web and print as one of content marketing’s most common forms.”

Video is indeed a storytelling medium, but it also drives strong results for content marketers across a variety of marketing objectives.

For example, blog posts incorporating video attract 3X as many inbound links as blog posts without video (Moz Blog, as cited in Kapost, accessed January, 2014). Inbound links amplify your website’s online presence and improve your rankings on search engine results pages, which in turn drives greater organic traffic to your site.

Video is also a powerful brand-building medium when used in conjunction with other tactics. The majority of email marketers (55%), for example, say that using video in email campaigns increases clickthrough rates, time spent, sharing, forwarding, and even conversions (eMarketer, June, 2013).

When executed correctly, video can play a critical role in any content marketing strategy.

Partnering to Win

Leading brands are increasingly turning to partners to help fuel their content creation efforts. Estimates vary, but somewhere between 43% and 62% of marketers currently outsource content creation to partners (Mashable, Feb 2012; CMI, 2013). Interestingly enough, research shows that the larger the company, the more likely it is to outsource content production and distribution. Why? First, effective content marketing requires frequency, and content creation is time-consuming for organizations of any size. Outsourcing content production and distribution lifts the burden on a company’s internal marketing team. “The interest is there,” says content marketing expert Adam Clement of *Slate*. “Partnering with vendors who can produce the content at scale has helped us capture it.”

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A second reason leading brands are choosing to outsource content creation is to benefit from the expertise of dedicated content producers. Quite simply, producing great videos is hard. In fact, “producing the kind of content that engages” is among the top challenges cited by both B2C and B2B content marketers (CMI, 2013). By working with experts who specialize in a particular type of content creation—be it slideshows, infographics, videos, or podcasts—brands can take advantage of a knowledge base that’s been developed over time and across clients and objectives.

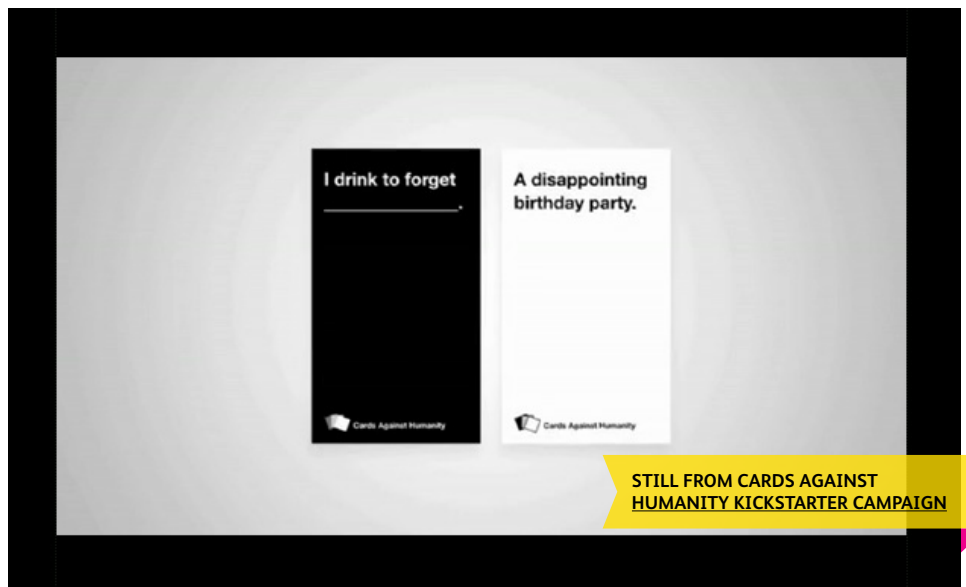
Best Practices for Video Marketing

At Visually, we work with our clients to make sure the video developed meets brand objectives while encouraging engagement, sharing, and impact. The most successful videos tend to follow a set of best practices. Five of our favorites are below:

1. TELL A STORY.

Video is a storytelling medium, so take a journalistic approach and tell the story of your brand, company, product, or issue. Feature real people – your company’s founder, CEO, employees, or clients. Stories make brands human and personal. Cards Against Humanity, the irreverent card game developed by a group of friends in Chicago, took this approach when they posted their video on Kickstarter. The authenticity of the team’s request for funding worked, quickly generating 4X the requested amount and ultimately driving sales of more than 100,000 units.

At Visually, we helped raise awareness for the issue of Mexican drug cartel violence by focusing the story on a single woman—a journalist named Maria Elizabeth Macías Castro, who was killed by a cartel—shedding light on a major international crisis. The video generated active debate and earned media coverage, and has received a staggering 431,000 views.



2. POST VIDEOS ON YOUR LANDING PAGES.

Post videos to pages where you need to grab users’ attention, such as campaign landing pages and brand homepages. With the average user attention span down to a mere 8 seconds, “embedding a video on your website not only will increase the length of time that visitors stick around, but, also, the number of conversions to paying customers,” advises KissMetrics (KissMetrics, Dec 2013)

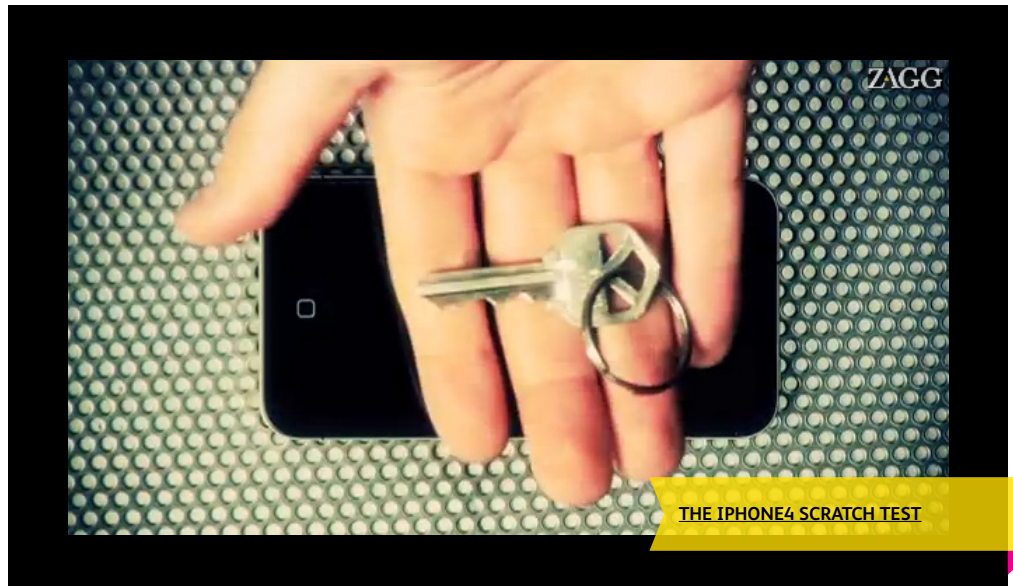
Posting videos to landing pages also takes full advantage of a video’s SEO potential, since each time users share the video, they’ll be linking to your domain and boosting your SEO presence.

But posting to your site alone isn’t enough. Supplement your on-site efforts by “fishing where the fish are,” and post to platforms like YouTube, Vimeo, Amazon, or Visually’s Marketplace, which already have a built-in audience seeking content to view and share. Include the link to the video on your website in the description field on those platforms. In this way, you’ll maximize both coverage and SEO impact for your video.

3. SHOW YOUR WARES.

Videos that showcase your product and explain how it works or why it's great perform well online. These videos also help drive sales: 94% of online shoppers watch videos, and the majority of consumers say that watching product videos makes them feel more confident about making a purchase (Invodo, 2013).

Zagg, the maker of iPhone plastic protectors, is an undisputed leader in the product demo video genre—their videos regularly generate 1M+ views on YouTube. Zagg teaches us



that product demos can be fun, entertaining, and share-worthy. Find the angle that makes your product a winner, and build your video around it.



4. DON'T BE AFRAID OF DATA.

It goes without saying that videos are more engaging than PowerPoint presentations, yet somehow, when tasked with presenting data, most marketers revert to using slides. Strong data backs up any good story; it can also drive a story forward. “The Economy of Coca-Cola,” for example, uses data to tell the story of how Coke evolved into a global business, employing powerful and recognizable Coke iconography to bring the data to life. The piece was nominated for the 2012 Emmy Award for Outstanding Achievement in Graphic Design and Art Direction in News and Documentary.



“The Real Victims of the War on Drugs” takes a different tack, developing a unique visual style for a story that is almost entirely made up of statistics, narrated by a subject matter academic expert. The video received hundreds of thousands of earned media impressions across major publishers.

5. CLOSE THE LOOP.

Videos serve as great stand-alone content. They’re even more valuable when they’re

part of a larger strategy. End your video with a call-to-action (e.g., learn more, donate, download, click to purchase, watch another video) to ensure you get the greatest value out of your content marketing efforts. After all, content should *continue* the conversation.

Continuing the conversation is exactly what Ariosa Dx, the maker of Harmony, a new, noninvasive pre-natal test, encouraged viewers to do once they finished watching the video. The pharmaceutical brand also included a URL to a site viewers could visit to learn more about Harmony and the broader issues surrounding pre-natal health.

Lights, camera, action.

52% of marketers cite videos as the highest-performing form of content marketing in their portfolio, ahead of whitepapers, photos, and buyer guides (eMarketer, Feb 2013) Videos can build awareness, drive consideration, and influence purchases. They increase loyalty, encourage sharing, and deliver earned media impressions.

Until recently, the one drawback of video has been resources: videos were time intensive and costly. “Producing videos isn’t always cheap, but it usually isn’t as expensive as people believe it will be, either,” says Josh Hardwick of ShortyMedia. “If you’ve commissioned and marketed infographics before, you definitely can afford to produce a video that will generate a good ROI for you/your client.”

At Visually, where we specialize in creating visual content, including infographics and videos, we certainly agree.

