

How to Create a Video Marketing Content Strategy



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Introduction

There's been a shift in how consumers find information about products - no longer do they turn to salespeople and traditional advertising materials to learn about products, services and which brands they should purchase. Instead, consumers now take a proactive approach where they research products and services online and invite recommendations from their friends and peers. Content marketing provides consumers with this information to assist them in making an informed purchasing decision.

Video content is an integral part of divulging this information - and it should be part and parcel of your content marketing strategy. Video is a powerful way to communicate your brand story, explain your value, build your customer relations, captivate prospects, earn trust, and boost sales. After all, there's a huge audience base for video, with 25% of global online Internet users watching video content daily (Statista, 2014).

Building a video marketing content strategy takes preparation. Before filming, editing, and publishing, it's important to examine your overall content strategy as well as your keywords and messaging topics which enable you to plan your video strategy, to complement to your text-based content. Doing this legwork ahead of time helps you make smarter decisions about which video projects and topics are worth pursuing.

In this white paper, you'll learn what content strategy and content marketing are, why your plan needs video, and how to create a video marketing content strategy for your brand.

What Is Content Strategy and Content Marketing?

A content strategy, according to Content Strategist Rahel Bailie, is "the planning aspects of content throughout its lifecycle, and includes aligning content to business goals, analysis, and modelling, and influences the development, production, presentation, evaluation, measurement, and sunseting of content, including governance" (Bailie, 2009). A content strategy is used to develop the quality branded content marketers share across all media channels and platforms with the purpose of education and engaging their audience and target markets.

Content marketing takes all the materials developed in a content strategy and presents them as a story. Effective content marketing distributes valuable and relevant content that attracts, retains, and delights a specific target audience. And the end goal is to convince your audience to act.

A content strategy used in conjunction with content marketing shares a consistent story and tone throughout all publication channels. Essentially, they enable and allow you to deliver the right message to the right audience at the right time.

Why You Need Video in Your Content Strategy

90% of customer purchase decisions are made before they contact your sales team, and 72% of B2B buyers watch video before making a buying decision (Snyder & Hilal, 2015). In this context, video is a must-have at all stages of the buying journey to help your customers decide.

It's an efficient medium for storytelling since it allows you to use sights and sounds to draw

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↑ Higher ranking

Google ranks websites with videos higher.

↑ 53x

Websites with video have 53x more of a chance to be ranked on Google's front page than those that don't.

↑ 80%

When there's an embedded video on a landing page, conversion rates increase by 80%.

↑ Better emails

Video in email results in email open rates increase by 5.6%, and click-through-rates double.

emotional connections; for educating because you can show your audience how to benefit from your products or services in an easily understandable format; and for delighting your audience by creating entertaining content that encourages them to share.

Videos are also useful for getting found online. Google ranks websites with videos higher: websites with video have 53x more of a chance to be ranked on Google's front page than those that don't. In fact, the top 70% of search listings on Google are video results, and YouTube is the second most used search engine with 4 billion views per day (Karr, 2014).

Email marketing also becomes more effective with a video marketing content strategy. When properly used, email open rates increase by 5.6%, and click-through-rates double. Most importantly, when there's an embedded video on a landing page, conversion rates increase by 80% (Karr, 2014).

Videos also gain more traction than other content types - audiences are 10 times more likely to embed, share, or comment on a video than text-only blogs and social media posts (Hinson, 2016). That's a huge reason why they're becoming increasingly important for mobile campaigns; mobile video ad revenue is set to top over \$8 billion by 2018 (Hoelzel, 2014).

How to Create Your Video Marketing Content Strategy

It should be apparent at this point how important a video marketing content strategy is, so now it's time to learn how to do it.

Decide on Your Audience and an Action for Them to Take

Different audiences will be receptive to different messages. When developing your video strategy, separate your buyers into specific groups - by demographics, segments and personas.

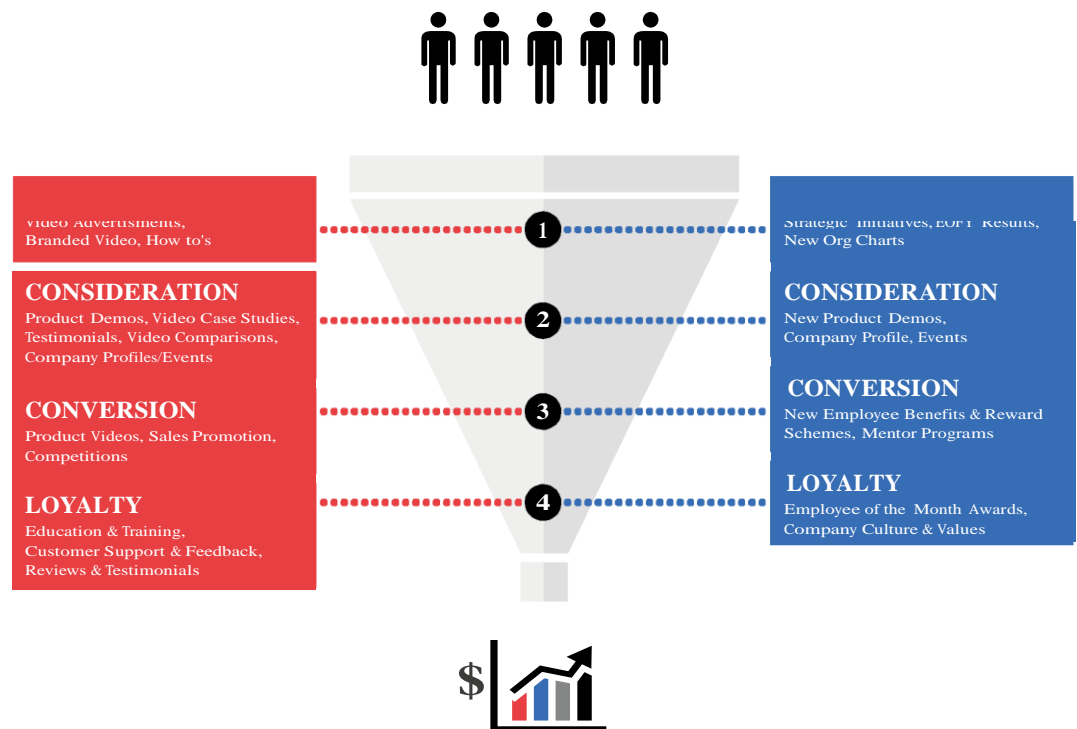
Example: The marketing team at a luxury car dealership knows they have two distinct customers: men between the ages of 45–65 with an annual salary of \$150,000+, and women between the ages of 18–34 with an annual income between \$75,000–\$249,000. These are two distinct segments that will respond to radically different messages.

By breaking down a customer-base into these segments, marketers can decide the stories of each segment and create videos centred around those stories. For the male persona, the story may be about how after a lifetime's worth of work it's time to reward yourself. For the female persona, the story can focus on the cutting-edge technology found in the car.

After identifying the audiences to target in a video strategy, the next decision to make is the action you want them to take. In the car dealership example, the obvious answer is to get the audience to visit the dealership to find out more information about the car. You can do the same with your content - your video may direct people to your website to find out more information. Whatever action you guide your audience to take will shape the composition of your videos.

Create Video Topics That Rival Your Competitors

The point of creating a video is to have evergreen content that puts you above your competition. To do that, you need to come up with the right topics to base your videos around. Your topics will be dependent on where your target audience is in the sales and marketing funnel.



Here's a brief overview of the type of content you should be creating at each stage:

Awareness: The purpose of these videos is to attract prospects. These videos should appeal to a broader audience than others in your sales funnel. They include brand videos, how-to videos, repurposed webinars, interviews with your senior staff or other industry thought leaders and company culture videos.

Consideration: These videos help your audience evaluate your company and gives them insight into the solutions you provide. Mid-funnel videos will be longer form because your audience is already aware of who you are and have a vested interest in learning more about what you do. Videos in this phase of the sales funnel include detailed product demonstrations, testimonials, case studies, and product integration.

Conversion: Videos at this stage of the funnel are there to leave no doubt in your audience's mind to go with your product as the solution. These videos will answer questions about your solution, check-in on your customers to make sure everything is going well, or provide additional instruction about the product.

Loyalty: Once you've converted someone into a client, you need to engage them with a nurturing process. Loyal customers are worth 10x as much as their first purchase (Toporek, 2013), so at this stage of the funnel, your videos should encourage you current customers to remain loyal to your brand. Ideas for this juncture include how other customers have innovatively used the product, webinars that give exclusive tips for the product, and miscellaneous material that will keep you on top of your customers' minds.

If you're stuck in the ideation stage, search for the video campaigns of your competitors. You'll then be able to gain some insight on what kind of videos perform best for your audience and create a similar story that is better. Or, you can see where there are topical and messaging holes in their video campaign and fill those with your videos.

You can also look at your written content and see what you can repurpose as a video. When repurposing video content, transpose the words on an HTML blog page and then embed your original video. This provides your audience two ways to experience your content and a greater ability to rank on search engines.

Figure Out the Goals and Objectives of Your Video

You want your audience to feel the time they spent watching your video was valuable - which will be determined by whether your video reached its promised goal. Your goal will also dictate your video's tone of voice and messaging hierarchy. Think about what information you want your audience to know once they have viewed the video:

- How to do something they didn't know before (Educational)
- Other people have used your product to great success (Testimonial)
- Where to buy and what type of deal they're getting (Sales Promotion)

You should also determine internal S.M.A.R.T. goals for each video you produce. A S.M.A.R.T. goal is specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound. These types of goals guide your marketing strategy and keep your entire team on the same page because they are clearly defined.

An example of a S.M.A.R.T. goal for a video campaign:

"Our new video will generate 100,000 views and increase our sales by 10% within four months after launch, extending our brand awareness and increasing the quality of leads."

There are other critical statistics beyond views you can measure to get a better understanding of how your video campaign is performing. VidCorp advises you to track the following metrics as well:

- Play rate - the percentage of your web visitors that play your video
- Watch rate - the percentage of a video did someone watch
- Conversion rate - how many people responded to the call to action in the video
- Social shares - how many times did the video get shared across all social media channels

Your video hosting platform will have these metrics available for you, as will Google Analytics. These metrics will help you gauge the relevance, quality, and engagement level of your video.



Determine Your Budget

Creating a video involves more than setting your phone on a tripod and hitting record (though some wildly popular videos do just that). You'll need to identify what's essential to getting your video created and determine your budget based on that.

First, you'll want to plan for talent. You can do this in one of three ways: hire a complete freelance team, hire a full-service content marketing agency, or create an in-house project. All three have benefits and weaknesses:

- **Freelance Team:** Often a cost-effective option, but can lead to complications if the freelance team doesn't work well together. Also, no guarantee for the quality of work.
- **Full-Service Content Marketing Agency:** Most costly, but provided is all the equipment and the agency will guarantee the quality of work.
- **In-house Team:** The most cost-effective option. Quality may be lower if employees aren't as experienced, and you may have to rent or buy the video equipment.

Whichever route your budget allows for, you'll need a script writer, director of photography, camera operator, lighting and sound operator, and an editor. The same person may be able to fill multiple roles.

Best Practices for Video Content

If your goal is to gain the greatest viewership for your videos and reach a high view through rate, use the following best practice tips:

- **Keep it short.** Audience attention drops around the 40-second mark, so don't extend your top-of-funnel videos more than 90 seconds.
- **Lighting matters.** You want your audience to be able to see the subjects of your video. If your video is too dark, the visual story will be too hard to understand.
- **Clear audio is essential.** Eliminate background noise such as the wind. Place your mics correctly when recording. Low-quality sound muffles the video's story and will decrease your watch rate.
- **Use proper body language.** Sitting up straight or standing tall while using animated hand gestures will keep the attention of your audience.
- **Include a call-to-action.** Specifying what you want your audience to do after watching your video, such as to subscribe to your channel, will bring you closer to accomplishing your goals.

Some of these practices depend on what kind of video you're making. Lighting and body language are essential for explainer videos, but won't be a concern if you're animating your video.

Know Which Distribution Channels to Use

You want your campaign to tell a cohesive story, so if you're releasing multiple videos in one video campaign, make sure to release all videos sequentially on the distribution channels you're using. You can also have multiple campaigns built specifically around these distribution channels, such as a video series for your blog.

Again, where you distribute will be determined by the goal of your videos and the demographics of your audience. For middle-funnel content, a site like YouTube is highly trafficked for search, so there's value in distributing longer-form content over that channel. Top-of-funnel content, however, lends itself to paid campaigns. Because videos in this phase of the sales cycle are shorter and punchier, the broader the audience you target, the more awareness you'll bring to your brand, and the likelier your audience will search for your more in-depth content.

Mobile platforms are an essential distribution channel with the development of HTML5 - in particular among the millennial generation. In fact, 48% of millennials only view videos on their mobile devices (O'Neill, 2015). And there are multiple ways for your video to reach your audience's mobile devices:



Email: 55% of mobile device users check their email on their mobile device first (Smith, 2016), meaning that most of the time when you send a video through email, a majority of the recipients will watch your video on their phone. Combined with the benefits that videos in an email don't get blocked by ad block software, produce higher click-through-rates, and increase revenue by 40% compared to emails without video (Daniels, 2013), email is one of the most efficient channels for distributing mobile video content.



SMS: SMS (short message service) is an underutilised distribution channel for mobile users. 90% of all text messages are read within the first three minutes after being received (Cote, 2014). Now, you won't be able to send your video content through SMS, but you can send a link to your video through SMS. Remember to write a text message providing context around your link, and only send text messages to those who have opted-in to receive text alerts from your company.



Social Media: Social media is also one of the biggest platforms for distributing video content. Facebook alone accounts for over 8 billion video views per day (Constine, 2015), and posts with video have an increased organic reach of 135% (Ross, 2015). Social has also usurped YouTube as the video viewing medium of choice (James, 2015), so you should spend significant time creating video campaigns to post to your social platforms. Also, because videos on Facebook play automatically in user feeds, you'll want to create videos with subtitles for the platform so your viewers can watch them without sound.

Tip: To make sure your video distribution channels have consistent content that tells a cohesive story, create a publishing schedule for your videos. Add your chosen distribution channels in the calendar so whoever you appoint to oversee your publishing schedule can determine which videos will be most receptive on your owned or paid channels. And if your content is valuable enough, you'll gain earned channels as you make your way through your publishing schedule.

Conclusion

As smartphones and the web's capabilities continue to expand, the power of video will continue to rise and be the emotive communication tool that differentiates you from your competitors. Either incorporating video into an existing content strategy or introducing a dedicated video content marketing strategy allows you to reach and distributed relevant video communications to targeted prospects and existing customers to meet expectation and build relationships and customer loyalty. Following the outlined best practices, learning how to leverage your distribution channels, and creating S.M.A.R.T. goals will give you a foundation for a holistic, integrated marketing communications strategy. It will also enable greater internal efficiencies saving you time and hassle and increase ROI to due to the ability to drive customer behaviours and actions whether that is a sale, product feedback or email subscriptions.

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About VidCorp

VidCorp is the world's first online video platform designed to give businesses of all sizes the tools needed to leverage effortlessly the power of video to achieve enviable commercial outcomes. VidCorp exists to deliver – communications, engagement and, most importantly, results. Our vision is to craft the smartest, simplest and most agile online video platform globally.

For more information, visit www.vidcorp.com

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