

Online video killed the radio star

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'Just-because-it-moves-and-makes-sounds-doesn't-mean-I'm-hanging-around-to-watch it' seems to be the rule of thumb when it comes to online users' approach to the massive number of videos they scroll through each day. What's more disconcerting is, that "hanging around" amounts to roughly 10 seconds, as a whopping one-fifth of viewers reportedly click 'off' a video, if they're not hooked by the time the progress bar hits double digits. That's why it's important to get it right. First time, every time as a CMO, entrepreneur or brand ambassador.



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Online video is a multi-faceted marketing beast with many variables that can make a big difference. To really cut it, you must get with the programme.

Seven no nonsense tips

Newsfeeds are on mute. Make sure you're not

Silent movies are making a comeback and it's all happening online. According to the statistics, 85% of Facebook videos are watched without sound, which means if you're targeting the 99.9% of the market who can't lip read, you need subtitles. With subtitles, you give the consumer in a coffee shop, or the paper pusher in the open plan office a chance to read your video message. Plus, there's the added benefit that videos with captions are watched 12% longer.

Speak to the chosen few

When it comes to video content, narrow down your audience. The idea is to engage a niche sector of people, with specific needs aligned to your specific subject matter. Brand relevance is key here. Handy tools on platforms like Facebook allow you to choose the preferred audience in a preferred city for each post. The days of reaching a "wider audience" are not as cool, nor effective, as they used to be. Going wide has passed its sell-by date; keeping it close delivers return.

Stay in shape

There are three shapes you can upload your video: square, landscape and vertical. Since every social media platform is different, it's important to physically custom build your video to maximise its impact. Square videos take up 78% more space than landscape on a newsfeed, which makes it obvious to square up when you're posting on Facebook. Built with vertical videos in mind, Instagram TV launched recently allowing users to post videos of up to 60 minutes long. Considering the fact that the Instagram audience recently topped one billion a month, a long-form production in the upright position is therefore also worth looking in to.

Camera, lights, strategy

Do I want website traffic? Do I want video views? Do I want sales? Or do I want engagement? Assigning an objective to your video is much better than going in blind. With a clear objective, you'd know how to better customise the call-to-action in order to achieve results. For instance, if you want engagement, ask your audience a question or create content that stirs emotion, getting them to share and comment. An effective pull strategy is as much part of the online video process as anything else that goes into the production.

Pillar talk is a real thing

When mapping out your content marketing, it's best to start with a breakdown of content pillars. Think of it as a funnel of the "whats, whos and whys": who will benefit from this video, what do we need to say to help them benefit from this video and why will they benefit from this video. Once you dot your i's on this one, you may find that one video will not suffice; and it'll be far more beneficial to chunk down your content into a series of videos. This way your content pillars create a whirlpool of fresh content resulting in brand impact and more traction.

The SEO How-Tos

Don't get caught out in the pretty picture department. It's not why you're in business. Your video content does not always need to blow the budget on epic aerial shots and location jumping. Simple and short "How-To" videos or tutorials work just as well, if not better. These info type vids speak to a given topic and have proven to have 46% more call to action and sharing effect than a cinematic Spielberg storyboard. Even better, your brand incidentally becomes a go-to authority on a shared topic of interest. Plus plus plus - it improves your SEO ranking exponentially. Rand Fishkin's Moz is a good example of this kind of thought leadership content, with his instalment of the popular Whiteboard Friday.

Youtube is not a strategy

Death by YouTube is quickly becoming the post-mortem of many digital brand plans. Considering that 500 million hours of videos are watched on YouTube each day, businesses often run the risk of believing that video content should only live on the YouTube platform. This is dangerous. While YouTube is a relevant platform for video, it is not the only platform that needs to make up your video content strategy. Your video should live on a variety of platforms with a string of link-to's and link-backs to your website. Native videos on Facebook have 10 times higher reach than YouTube links, and a video on your landing page can increase click conversions by over 80%. It's a no-brainer that your video content placement must be diversified, keeping your audience on a steady and exciting content journey.

The "moving pictures" have come a long way since the days of *The Three Stooges*. Developments such as Instagram TV are further testament to the ongoing power video wields online, which makes it imperative to have a rock solid, well-thought-out strategy to go with your content. Statistics add by 2019, our online video traffic will account for 80% of all consumer Internet traffic. So think beyond the storyboard to get the most bang from your online campaign.

I've worked with award-winning agencies including Ogilvy & Jupiter Drawing Room. My portfolio of brands & campaigns I have worked on includes Volkswagen, Mercedes Benz, Smirnoff Nightlife Exchange, Rocking The Daisies, Cape Town International Jazz Festival, Revlon, Almay, Maserati, Mitchum, and Fabiani.
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