

## Ten Essentials for Compelling Online Video

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### **Create a Quality Video (yes, there ARE consequences for a poorly produced video).**

This may seem obvious, but you'd be surprised by the amount of low quality video that can be found on otherwise high quality websites. Frankly, it's important to remember that all video content is not created equal. According to PEW International, 62% of online video viewers say their favorite videos are those that are professionally produced. Jupiter Research also found that more than 25% of online video users would be less likely to return to a web site if they had a poor viewing experience.

One of the biggest mistakes a company can make is to "test the waters" with online video. Going low budget, in-house (or using Uncle Bob's Flip camera) in order to save money is a bad idea. The consequences of poorly produced online video can be significant (think negative brand perception and potentially lost revenue). Creating good video is an art form – and should be approached with the same attention to quality and detail as your print materials. You want to present the best possible image of your company or brand with quality video.

Finally, when you consider the potential upside return on your investment with a professionally produced online video, the risk of a negative brand perception by creating a video internally (in order to save money) just doesn't make sense.

#2

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### **Your video content is an asset – leverage it.**

It's critical to think of the broadest number of communication opportunities when it comes to creating online video content. It starts by asking some key questions ...

- What are our objectives for this video?
- What audiences do I want to reach?
- Will these audiences require different messages?
- Are there some common messages?
- How will we distribute these videos?
- How will I measure the results?

While these are important questions, so is considering the value of your video assets and how your videos can be distributed across a variety of channels to increase the effective reach of your messages.

As an example you might want to produce a corporate identity video. At a single video recording session it can be highly effective to capture a variety of things such as ...

- 1) A welcome message from your CEO that can also be used on your company homepage.
- 2) Top customers sharing why they enjoy doing business with your company.
- 3) A product demonstration.

These otherwise individual video assets can also be “combined” (edited) into a variety of videos.

- Consider how an alternative introduction could be recorded for use on channel partner web sites.
- A corporate video could be re-formatted into an in-banner video for display on relevant web sites to engage broader audiences where they “hang out”.
- Customer success stories on your web site could be individually featured in monthly company newsletters in order to drive subscribers back to your web site.
- Video clips could be attached to press releases for new product introductions.
- Including QR Codes on print collaterals could easily link to videos on your web site and take advantage of growing trends of video viewing on mobile devices.

While these are just a few creative ways to maximize engagement and drive richer messaging, an experienced rich media production company will also be able to help you to determine the packaging and distribution options for your video. Early stage project planning should provide a road map for the types of recordings that should be included in the video session. Essentially, the objective is to examine all the ways video can be leveraged to effectively increase the return on your investment in video.

### #3:

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#### **Broaden your vision and widen your reach.**

Though most companies are adept at thinking about ways to use video within their company’s reach, it’s important to remember it’s a big world. Viewers come from many different entry points. That’s why it’s worth researching syndication options to increase exposure prior to beginning your video production. You may be surprised that other companies would welcome your content. These might include channel partners, resellers, press outlets, or other related industry web sites. Associations or companies offering complementary services may also welcome your video content on their web site and other digital spaces. For instance, some would appreciate a video white paper on a compelling industry topic presented within their own web site. These companies understand the value they can offer to their own community members by distributing informative content.

The more “topically informative” your video is, (instead of a “product pitch”); the more likely you’ll be able to place your video content on other high traffic web sites. A topical video has many benefits, including ...

- increased visibility
- establishing your company’s expertise
- detailing complexities and recommending solutions

The bottom line is that by thinking beyond the confines of your own company you’ll increase awareness, drive more leads and widen your reach. Working with partners in advance to increase

distribution of your video may provide opportunities to co-develop content and share production costs while increasing the distribution.

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#### **Capture audiences with more show than tell.**

It may seem simple enough to video record a person talking, but don't let your content stop there, as the most engaging videos effectively combine many rich layers of information for audiences.

One of the most powerful layers is what professional video companies refer to as "B roll". This term often refers to cutaway video sequences that convey the visual story. B-roll does the showing, while the audio is the telling. Often, while watching an interviewee, the scene will cutaway to "show" what the audio portion is describing. This device alone drives audience engagement and deepens their connection to your message. Here the audio and visual layers combine to show and tell.

Though B-roll footage makes a video more interesting, it's also used to cover an interviewee's verbal or physical tics. This allows editors to cut around the em & awe's, sniffs and coughs ...or, any irrelevant commentary otherwise recorded during an interview.

Other layers that empower communications to drive engagement include ...

- Motion Graphics, such as backgrounds that support branding
- Text or other graphical elements
- 3D animations and special effects
- Compelling music and underscores

Though these devices are used to hold the viewers attention, keep in mind that the best videos start with a well-written script, a well-defined visual presentation strategy and expert editorial transitions that carry viewer attention throughout your video in a compelling manner.

Companies often lean towards utilizing their corporate executives in video programming because of their expertise on a topic. Despite their lack of training or experience with on-camera presentations, such extemporaneous dialogue is very difficult to deliver directly to the camera and can feel stilted. This can make for a presentation that's awkward and won't hold the viewer's attention, and moreover can leave a poor first impression in the minds of viewers about corporate officers and even your company. In other words, choose your presenter wisely. Either consider teleprompter training for your executive, or hiring a professional actor who possesses the skill set to present your message in an effective and compelling way.

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#### **Your video content should provide a lot more than a sales pitch.**

One of the biggest mistakes companies make with online video is to overly rely on a straight "sales pitch" video. Sure, product features and product descriptions are an important part of your communication strategy. But the problem is, it isn't very interesting from a viewer standpoint. Essentially, if viewers suspect they are being sold or "pitched", they'll put up a wall of defense. By using a more creative tactical approach, you'll not only be able to communicate the same beneficial information, you'll connect in a way that's more readily consumed by viewers.

Research indicates that web site visitors are more likely to view a video than to read the text on your web site. Essentially, your web site visitors want to be entertained and informed at the same time. Video is the perfect vehicle for driving your message into their minds...and their hearts. The reality is viewers are looking to 'experience' your message. Most visitors want to be told a story before they're willing to read a lot of text, or until they reach certain stages of research.

Now consider how creating a series of Customer Success Stories could address relevant prospect pain points. Such a strategy allows viewers to choose relevant story topics and discover how your solution might meet needs or solve their problems.

A 'Video White Paper' concept might feature a notable industry expert talking about key ideas that affirm your company's solutions; whereas, a viral video may communicate similar information while providing a bit of humor. Whether it's one of these scenarios or another direction entirely, building your messaging into a story construct is the best way to successfully capture a viewer's attention.

#### #6:

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### **Choosing the right platform technology makes a big difference.**

Because companies often invest significant time, creative energy, and resources to develop multimedia content that showcase their expertise, products and services, the corporate web site is the perfect place to provide video content, but many platforms still require visitors to leave the company's web site in order to view video programs. That's not only un-necessary, it's why selecting the right platform technology makes all the difference. With today's streaming technology, embedding your multi-media program directly into the company web site is the first step to insuring that visitors stay on your site. Additionally, with such technology, the platform for your multimedia and video content can also be truly portable. Instead of having to recreate content for each new URL location, using the right platform will allow you to embed your video in multiple independent locations, whether that's within your corporate web site, on channel partners' sites, landing pages or micro-sites.

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### **Give Audiences Control Over Their Experience**

Let's face it; we're living in an ON DEMAND world. Audiences can view WHAT they want, WHEN they want and HOW they want. By giving viewers navigation options that allow them to be in the driver's seat, they'll naturally become more engaged in the program. For example, a media player with a search option allows viewers to find relevant content; and, an agenda, allows the viewer to jump to the "chapter" they are most interested in.

For communication professionals, it's natural to start with what you want to say, however by mapping the flow of the program first, it will insure that you include the right elements in your script and moreover result in a more effective production. During the script writing process, you will need to think "non-linear" and prepare each segment as a standalone element, allowing viewers to easily navigate the program in a way that readily provides them the information they want. If you segment your program appropriately, giving viewers the ability to jump to the content

they're most interested in, you'll produce better results than a program otherwise produced in a single linear format.

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**Your video should be interactive and call audiences to take action.**

There are two distinct reasons why web video is so powerful. First, it's a highly engaging medium that draws people in and holds their attention. Second, viewers are more likely to take immediate action on what they see than what they read. That's why providing interactivity within video is very powerful. For example, by providing a variety of interactive choices such as on-screen 'conditional branching' you'll additionally gain valuable insight into viewer interests. These "choices" can be tracked and recorded in the viewers activity profile along with registration and survey data. This information can then be used to guide follow-up since it reveals the viewer's priorities and interests. Polling is another form of interactivity that can act as a data-gathering tool for collecting feedback and market data, that can be examined as individual or aggregated data.

When you integrate "calls to action" within a program, you'll build relationships with viewers more quickly, increase viral opportunities, and build richer data profiles. Examples of a call to action would be to "Send Me More Information", "Register to Download a Document", "Share this Video with a Friend", "Ask A Question" or "Subscribe to Company Newsletter". Typically calls to action support a company's objectives for lead generation and qualification. Ideally there should be anywhere from 1 - 4 calls to action. Interestingly, in a MediaPost study, 57% of respondents stated that they had shared links to video clips. So you may want to consider a call to action that encourages audiences to "Share this video with a Friend", since web video often spreads virally. Best practice companies also carefully examine their sales cycle and include relevant 'calls to action' based on where potential viewers may be in the buying cycle as they initially view video programs.

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**Have a plan for measuring the success of your video.**

Tracking usage and viewer preferences should be a requirement for anyone developing online video because it offers companies' great insight toward understanding their prospects and customers and can greatly inform your sales process. Your online video platform should have tracking and reporting capabilities built in so that you can benefit from the rich metrics available, especially to better understand your audience.

Essentially, gauging the success of corporate video programs usually centers on analyzing the level of viewer interaction. By establishing benchmarks for your video beforehand you'll be able to assess engagement quality and determine viewer interests. Such things as lead registrations, segment view-times, downloads of collateral materials and other viewer interactions will ultimately provide richer statistics to measure the success of a video campaign.

Of course, combined audience data can be examined at the macro level, such as total views, average view times and average segment view times. Together, all of these data points can feed into an engagement formula. Such information will be critical to determining the effectiveness of your program and can be used as virtual market research in product development, market planning and almost every aspect of your business.

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**Use video platform technology that automatically imports individual viewer data into your CRM system ...or just makes connecting with your audience produce results.**

Utilizing a rich media platform that allows for easy integration of individual viewer data into your sales process is critical for follow-up and return on investment. Make sure that the information captured from the video program, such as individual viewer registration and contact information, can be seamlessly passed into the company CRM system. This also means that your sales reps can receive immediate notification when a viewer has watched your video program. Such systems can automate 'thank you' email responses to viewers who register or may ask a question. Through such notifications, you'll be able to follow-up in a timely fashion with key insights to your viewer's interests...which could effectively lead to increasing sales.

Think of it this way: features such as these can turn your company's online video program into a "lead generation machine".

#### About LIGHTGROUP

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Engage with **LIGHTGROUP** and you'll find a video media services firm that provides cutting edge thought leadership in video communications strategy, production and program development. We specialize in creating video for broadcast, online media communications and the integration of rich media platforms to deliver engaging visual experiences. Our teams are seasoned industry professionals who offer unsurpassed production, technical, and creative services in the realm of rich media. Whether it is to educate, inform, or entertain we're committed to providing the highest levels of professional service and generating measurable results for our clients.

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