

Using Video to Promote and Extend the Life of Your Events

Introduction

Internet video is seeing unprecedented growth for communication and marketing. This paper will cover the impact of this growth for promoting and extending the life of events with examples and ideas for improvement.

Video in Society

The use of internet video is growing at an exponential rate. There are several intertwined contributing factors:

Growth of online video:

According to comScore, the number of videos watched in the U.S. grew by 660% month-over-month from February 2011 to February 2012. U.S. viewers watched nearly 38 billion videos during the month of February 2012 along with 7.5 billion video ads with Google's YouTube generating the highest number of views at 16.7 billion¹.

YouTube and other video sharing sites

YouTube is the world's largest video sharing site, and the third largest internet site overall after Facebook and Google^{2,3}. Consider these statistics:

- Hours of video uploaded to YouTube every minute: 60
- Number of videos viewed on YouTube everyday: 4 billion
- Number of unique visits to YouTube every month: 800 million
- Total number of hours of video watched on YouTube each month: 3 billion
- Percent of YouTube visitors that come from outside the U.S.: 70%
- Number of countries with localized versions of YouTube: 42
- Total number of languages YouTube is broadcast in: 54
- Total number of views YouTube had in 2011: 1 trillion**

** (140 views for every person on Earth)

As highly trafficked as YouTube is, it still draws less than 40% of online video visits⁴ with many other video sites drawing significant traffic as well⁵.

Mobile video and devices

One of the top activities for mobile users involves viewing video from their devices. For the first time, video accounted for over half of all mobile data traffic (52%), a number that should reach over 70% by 2016. In fact, the number of mobile devices should actually exceed the world's population in 2012⁶.

One of the drivers behind these numbers is the rise of touch tablet computers, which are on track to become the fastest growing technology hardware devices in human history⁷. Market research firm IDC has raised its forecast for tablet sales in 2012, indicating that it saw greater than expected shipments in 2011. IDC now expects consumers will buy 106.1 million tablets in 2012 – a 54% increase from 2011⁸. By

2016, mobile-connected tablets will generate almost as much traffic as the entire global mobile network will in 2012, with much of that content being some form of video⁹.

Social media impact

YouTube statistics indicate a very strong connection between video and other social media¹⁰: For example:

- 500 years of YouTube video are watched every day on Facebook, and over 700 YouTube videos are shared on Twitter each minute.
- 100 million people take a social action on YouTube (likes, shares, comments, etc.) every week.
- More than 50% of videos on YouTube have been rated or include comments from the community.
- Clicks on the 'like' or 'dislike' button on YouTube have doubled since the start of 2011. For every 'dislike,' YouTube gets 10 'likes'. Clearly, people like to tell others about the stuff they love.
- People now watch over 2 billion videos per day on YouTube alone! That is almost twice the prime time audience of the three major television networks put together¹¹.

To conclude, internet video is heavily used in the U.S. and globally, and it will continue to grow substantially over the next few years.

Benefits of Internet Video Growth

Engagement

Simply stated, video is more engaging and compelling than other media. It is an easy way to present information with no reading required! People are accustomed to television and like to watch video.

Video combines pictures, sound, text and movement to create an impact far greater than each of these individual elements alone -- and far more than a web page of text could ever provide. People tend to watch more than they read or listen. Web videos allow viewers to sit back and absorb the message, just as presented to them. What could take many paragraphs or even pages of text to communicate can be presented in just a few engaging moments with video. Web videos captivate, engage and entertain site visitors.

Increased retention

Studies show that most people are visual learners¹², while other adult learning studies show that we remember 10% of what we read, 20% of what we hear, 30% of what we see, and a huge 50% of what we hear AND see¹³. With results like these, video can make a typical website up to 300% more effective for audience retention¹⁴.

Accessibility:

Internet videos are viewable on many sources including computers, phones, tablets and, increasingly, television.

Sharing:

With social media links and integration, videos are an ideal channel for sharing content to an audience. If done right, the multiplying impact of viral videos (those that are shared widely) can quickly spread a message. Videos are an ideal channel for sharing value added content to your audience.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO):

A 2010 Forrester Research study found that videos are 53 times more likely to generate a first-page ranking than traditional SEO techniques¹⁵. Google's universal search showcases video content on the first page and, usually prominently above the fold (the top part of the webpage which you can see without scrolling). Video is a significant opportunity to drive traffic, leads, and, ultimately, business through your website by executing a basic video content strategy.

Higher click-through rates compared to traditional email

Emails that include video are often more likely to be opened than traditional text-based email. In fact, Forrester Research reports that video can actually double or even triple click-through rates for email marketing campaigns¹⁶.

Video email offer recipients more information in a shorter period of time. The email message with the "play triangle" in a picture is visually more appealing than text, and is easy to access on most mobile devices as well. The email tools offer social media links for sharing and videos, if done well, are likely to get passed around to colleagues and played multiple times.

Tracking:

Video views can be tracked and, in some cases, extensive details on viewing behavior can be obtained. Depending on the video distribution product you use, metrics like view receipts, viewing time, length of view, and repeat views are just a few of the tracking behaviors available. With outbound marketing campaigns, personalized URLs (PURLs) can be used to create unique links per recipient with tracking codes to determine viewer identities without a login requirement. Others viewers can be tracked using a "guestbook" registration form. Obviously, this type of data can be very helpful in marketing and lead generation efforts.

Plummeting Costs:

From equipment to distribution channels, the cost of video production is a fraction of what it was just a few years ago. Video hardware continues to get smaller, better quality and cheaper each year. HD video cameras are in our mobile phones. A complete video production and streaming studio "in a box" with switchers, special effects generator, multiple audio/video inputs/outputs can be had for under US\$5,000. This replaces what used to be hundreds of thousands of dollars and pallets of equipment. Good basic video editing software is free from both Apple and Microsoft and the cost for very high-end editing software has dropped significantly over the years as well.

Distribution channels are also getting less expensive. The cost for professional web video streaming and hosting is also lower than in past years. YouTube provides a free solution, Vimeo and others have freemium hosting options, and Brainshark offers freemium as well as enterprise editions for both

creating videos online and hosting them. There are many other vendor alternatives than there have been in the past.

Shorter Learning Curves:

You no longer need to be a video expert to make great looking videos. Using consumer-friendly editing software, anyone - including your college interns - can produce video content for corporate and marketing communications.

Simply stated, video is not a trend -- it's an imperative. Attendees and viewers today demand engaging and interactive content, and they expect that content to be highly functional, highly intuitive and highly intelligent. Video delivers all of that as an innovative and non-intrusive form of marketing.

Video for Events

Events by their nature are visual and social. Events are a natural for video to help engage attendees before, during and after meeting. There is a multiplicity of ways that this can take form:

Before the event

Events are content generators. There are speakers, entertainers, exhibitors, gala dinners, and satisfied attendees from past events. All are natural to include in email and online promotions for upcoming events.

How can marketers make this happen? Here are a few suggestions:

- ✓ Create a video from the CEO, show organizers, and/or key volunteers about why viewers should attend this meeting. This promo clip can give a quick overview of the coming highlights of the event, speakers, performers, networking opportunities, topics, giveaways, and much more. You should also include information on how to register and "save the date" details via a specific call to action if possible.
- ✓ Post this video to YouTube and your website, and use embedded video links in promotional emails for the event. Video links have demonstrated a much greater click-through and share rate compared to standard email, so this can really boost your ability to drive registration.
- ✓ Most speakers, musicians, and other entertainers have YouTube clips. Post these on and aggregated "video page" at your event website.
- ✓ As part of the speaker contract, ask presenters to create a video or PowerPoint-to-video presentation that covers what they will be speaking on at the event. These videos can also be posted to YouTube for added visibility.
- ✓ Aggregate these videos in one spot online, allowing you to drive viewers to more event-related content.

- ✓ Post these promotional videos on your [Facebook Page](#), [Facebook Event Page](#), [LinkedIn Company Page](#), [LinkedIn Event Page](#), [Twitter](#) and other social media channels. You can even create a [Pinterest](#) page to aggregate these YouTube videos as well.
- ✓ Create an [event Twitter hashtag](#) to promote as a search vehicle through all social media channels. This will help to encourage engagement with your content and begin an online conversation about the event.

During the event

Live events are replete with content opportunities in which video can be used to extend the footprint of the meeting and promote the next event. Consider some of the following:

- ✓ Webcast the keynote addresses and other key portions of the event to extend the event far beyond the four walls of the meetings space. Video brings an extra dimension that is more impactful than other media channels. A video production crew should be used for high profile video production.
- ✓ Stream other portions of your event to remote audiences in a [hybrid meeting](#) format or as a [webcast](#) to increase the footprint of your event.
- ✓ Use produced video to provide compelling introductions and content during general sessions.
- ✓ Video record your CEO or other executives discussing something cool, new or important about your company, association or a specific product.
- ✓ Encourage speakers to incorporate video in their presentations to provide compelling, time-efficient and engaging ways of describing elements or product demonstrations.
- ✓ Bring in remote speakers (either by design or to fill in for missed flight connections) using streaming video.
- ✓ Capture video of the educational sessions to deliver on-demand after the event either for a fee, for certification programs, or as promotion of next year's event.
- ✓ Record video for event press releases to increase their impact: Pixability reports that in some cases, press releases that include video components have received a 500% increase in views¹⁷.
- ✓ Interview speakers at the event and use this video for additional web content.

- ✓ Interview satisfied attendees to use to promote the next event. Ask them why they came, what they have learned, and what they liked. This will produce lots of great content for promotional videos. More often than not, people will love the attention of being featured in an online video, increasing the likelihood that these videos will be shared with friends and colleagues.
- ✓ Shoot video of the galas and other special events to show viewers what they missed as promotion for the next event.
- ✓ Live stream an event channel from the exhibit hall with interviews, commentary and other content.
- ✓ Interview the “top 10” exhibitors or the ones with the most creative or innovative content to combine in a compelling video to provide content and increase exhibitor exposure.
- ✓ Exhibitors can use video in creative displays (3D video, interactive iPad video, video walls, etc.) to attract and engage exhibit attendees to their booths. Video can provide high-quality and focused messages about services/products that can be compelling to visitors. On-demand video can answer specific questions, freeing staff up for other interactions.
- ✓ Exhibitors should create video demonstrations of their products to post on YouTube and present on-demand at their booths. Alternatively, they can upload PowerPoint slides of their demonstrations and narrate them using a solution such as Brainshark, to create their video.
- ✓ Encourage attendees to upload their own videos from the event to YouTube, Facebook and other social media channels using the event hashtag in the title and description.
- ✓ A video wrap-up at a closing session is often a great way to remind your audience of the event highlights, key topics and themes covered. You can also use this opportunity to thank attendees, sponsors and others that helped make the event a success.
- ✓ Include QR codes in exhibit hall signage and in printed material that links to event videos that can be watched by attendees on their smartphones or tablets.
- ✓ Encourage attendees, speakers and attendees to collaborate and share photos, PowerPoint slides and videos that you can compile using solutions such as Brainshark. Share the presentation via social media as a summary of each day of the event.

After the event

There are significant opportunities to use videos generated during the event to extend the life of the meeting and promote future events.

Here are some of the ways that this is happening:

- ✓ An edited video of conference highlights can be used to showcase the event after the fact. Videos like these can be posted at the association, corporate or event website (as well as various social media channels), reminding attendees of what a good time they had and showing non-attendees what they missed.

Videos allow you to show rather than tell how spectacular the event was: the venue, the décor, the food displays, the impressive turnout, the existing entertainment, and the amazing speakers. This content makes excellent material for a variety of marketing vehicles including blogs, other social media channels, mobile channels, email campaigns, and other web content such as next year's event webpage. You can also include a "save the date" announcement within the video. This video often times should be posted to YouTube as well to reach a larger audience. It is recommended that these videos be in high definition, short (about 3 minutes or less), and with care taken for using keywords in the title, description and tagging.

- ✓ Ask sponsors, participants, speakers and exhibitors to share event related videos on their social media channels, as this is an easy way to greatly extend the impact of the event after the fact.
- ✓ Video recordings of the sessions (all or part of them) can be posted for on-demand viewing (for pay, for free, with restricted access to attendees only, for members only, or open to everyone). This can be used for review for those attending the session; to enable attendees going to other sessions to see what they have missed; to provide benefit for members unable to attendee the meeting; or open to the public to advance an idea or as promotion for future events. Ideally, combine the video and audio with PowerPoint slides and other presentation graphics though services such as Brainshark, which can also be used to share content and track every view. Through a content delivery network and/or a customized event portal, you can charge viewers to stream or download your conference videos. A portal acts as a one-stop-shop for all event content and presentations, ensuring maximum impact long after the event has ended.

You can also use presentation "guest books" to capture viewer contact information, including survey questions to gather input, and track viewership to better forecast attendance and topics of interest for your next event.

- ✓ Videos of key sessions can be highlighted throughout the year, providing continuous fresh content on a regular basis that can help improve your overall site traffic.
- ✓ Videos are also great for testimonials. Let your speakers, exhibitors, attendees and others sing the praises of your event. There is nothing like a satisfied customer telling potential customers how well your event or product works. The more details, the more believable.

- ✓ A collection of exhibitor interviews of the best booths or most innovative products at a show can provide compelling content as well. This is also another vehicle for exhibitor visibility.
- ✓ Finally, it's a good idea to feature sponsors in promotional videos. If done right, the sponsors may use your video as a marketing tool, which could help gain more attention for your event.

Conclusion

Internet video is widely used in society, is growing rapidly and has great opportunities for use in the events industry. Videos can engage viewers, can increase retention of content, are accessible via many devices, and can be easily shared via social media channels. The use of videos can improve your search engine rankings and video email marketing has fully trackable and higher click-through rates compared to traditional marketing methods. The costs to produce and distribute video from point of inception to delivery have reduced dramatically.

As events are visual, the visual nature of video is a natural opportunity to help market and extend the reach of events. Videos can be used before, during and after the event to convey your messages, as well as improve attendance at future events.