

## Online Video: Giving Marketing a Powerful Boost

by Dan Logan

“eMarketer reports that in 2008 more than 50% of the US population, 155.2 million people, will watch video online.”

Online video is one of the best ways to engage an audience in a sincere and personal way. It represents a shift from targeting consumers via more static media to entering into a more interactive relationship with them. And the numbers are staggering. Video sites have quickly become some of the most highly trafficked sites with consumers watching over 9 billion online videos per month. YouTube and Google are leading the pack but many corporate websites are also realizing the value of video.

For those businesses that have yet to embrace the video trend, resistance ranges from concerns about preparing and lighting a set, to the perception that the costs outweigh the benefits. These factors may have held true in the past but are becoming more of a myth as significant advances in technology and techniques have made it possible to effectively reach a huge number of people for a minimal investment of time and money.

### Why video enhances your marketing mix.

Videos are a great way to bring a service brand to life. Through video, you can convey your culture, talk about your approach to working with clients and share the personalities and people in your organization. Video can also empower you to distribute business news in a timely manner. Consider the increasingly grim financial headlines. It has never been more important to communicate with clients—and quickly and frequently. This is particularly true within financial services but the need to build trust, good will and strong relationships with clients cuts across many industries. It is in times like these that people want to hear from the CEO, their fund manager, or maybe the head of a distribution channel. Video makes this “one to many” type of communication possible and personal.

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Here are some important tips to help turn your videos into powerful marketing tools:

- **Your video must work as content.**

Don't think of your video as a show, but rather another tool in your arsenal for reaching clients. Use it to distribute highly relevant information, just as you would in print and email communications.

- **Keep it short.**

As a general rule, anything longer than two minutes will feel like a very long time for viewers. You have to be mindful of the fact that the average attention span of web users is measured in seconds. If your video serves a marketing purpose, remember that it's just an opportunity to open up a dialogue around your products and services. It shouldn't take the place of the overall sales process.

- **Consider ways to share your videos.**

The placement of your videos is critical to whether or not they are viewed. If they are on your corporate website, they shouldn't be tucked away on deeper subpages. If they need to live there, use callouts with links on the homepage to drive users to those pages.

You may also look into uploading your video to an online community site like YouTube as a way to increase the audience reach. Safeco Insurance uses YouTube to share quick spots they've created that help educate business owners on the importance of carrying adequate insurance.

- **Monitor and measure your results.**

Use the basic principles of search engine optimization to help your videos get found. This means creating rich and relevant titles and metadata tags that describe the video. Once users have found your video, look at the analytics to determine what's working, if the videos get forwarded and any other data that measures performance.

To date, many forward-thinking organizations are integrating online video communications into their public relations, corporate communications, and marketing efforts. It is possible that as new technologies emerge, streaming video will become the broadcast medium of choice.