



Business Strategies

Take Advantage of Video

As you look at new marketing strategies and techniques to drive success, don't forget about the power of video.

By Michael Hammond

We all love the movies. They take us away to a new place. So, think about it, you can foster that same engaging feeling among potential clients about your company by using video. In the article entitled "How to create effective video for social media marketing" by Matt Singer, he concludes that when you consider "leaders in the video commerce space (such as QVC) are driving billions of dollars in sales each year through the power of video, and Internet audiences consuming tens of billions of online videos each month, it's no wonder that video is one of the leading areas where social

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media marketers are making new investments as they plan their social strategies."

I know what you're thinking: If I do video I want to do it right. So, how do I take advantage of video to get maximum results? Singer says, "Beyond amplifying existing video content such as TV commercials and high end product demos, many social media marketers hit a dead end in terms of what video content to affordably create on a scalable, regular basis. The good news is that with the proliferation of HD smart phone cameras and HD web cams, professional and effective social media marketing videos can be produced affordably and quickly."

Are you still lost on how to use video to the fullest? Here are some ideas:

First, Singer notes that event videos work well with social media because they're timely and often involve interesting visual surroundings. There can be compelling people to highlight, and they take place in conjunction with a company's marketing priorities (such as a product launch), so creating event videos aligns well with overall marketing goals.

The "anchor" of an event video is to feature one key spokesperson's message, usually delivered by a company executive. The target length for this message should be about 45 seconds, which will be the total length of the final video. Consider filming this segment toward the beginning of the event. This is done for a number of reasons, namely that the spokesperson is less likely to be tied up in the responsibilities of the event and the background noise will be lower so you're more likely to get clean audio. Adding a low cost lavalier mic to your smartphone can also dramatically improve audio quality during a noisy event.

Also, in describing the event, your spokesperson will typically mention the event's key goals, attributes, or guests, which can in turn guide what you film to visually supplement the spokesperson's message. Don't forget to coach your spokesperson to appear both approachable and credible. Approachable can mean keeping the energy up, which takes overt effort when speaking on camera, and smiling (especially at the beginning and end of the video message). Acting in a credible fashion means speaking in one's own voice, being less of a salesperson and more of a helpful expert, and sharing interesting information about what's going on and why.

The crowd shot is also critical. Capturing an event's buzz is one key piece of footage that should be added to any good social media event video. Since the goal is to show as many attendees as possible with one shot, positioning yourself in one corner of the room, possibly standing up on a chair, will give you the widest angle to get as many people as possible into the shot. With a smart

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phone, adding a wide-angle lens attachment (\$25 or less) can make this shot easier.

The best looking crowd shots are filled with people, so be sensitive in choosing the shot angle to maximize the visible crowd. If a room is long, film “down the length” of the room towards the crowd vs. sideways where fewer people can be seen. The viewer will naturally be drawn to the crowd members that happen to be in the foreground of the shot, so decide if the people who happen to be in front accurately reflect or represent your target audience.

Also, many events have at least one moment where a guest speaker is giving a speech, or the host is on stage welcoming everyone. Rather than use this shot as the anchor shot, it's best to get a short segment of this action to use as one of the multiple short shots that will support the anchor shot. When filming the action shot, you'll have fewer options in terms of angles, because the podium is fixed in one part of the room. You do have a choice of depth though, and you'll want to film close enough so you can make out the face of the speaker, but far away enough that you can get as much crowd in the shot as possible to avoid making the speaker look like she's speaking in a room by herself.

From there, move to the guest shots. Many events have key attendees who will be highlighted by the spokesperson in the anchor shot. Getting isolated shots of these guests at the event requires knowing what they look like, so using Google with your phone can help you track them down. When filming a guest, you'll discover that most of the time they will be in conversation when you find them. The “fly on the wall” look can be very effective in tying the footage of the special guest into the entire event video.

This means filming the guest's face over the shoulder of the person with whom the guest is speaking. Try as well to capture a few seconds when the guest is speaking about a positive or humorous subject vs. a serious subject – it sounds small, but the last thing you want is to have your anchor refer to all the great special guests and for the corresponding shots of the guests to feature scowls or frowns.

When filming one of these videos it's important

to optimize the lighting. When you have the choice of angle with the guests or anchor, try to film with bright lights behind you (with the lights shining into your back), so that the lights will light the person's face, and you'll get a more even, attractive look. If you film “into” the lights (with the lights in front of you), your mobile phone camera, or any camera, will have trouble showing the subject's face clearly without blowing out the rest of the image. Try to pick an angle where there are not heavy shadows on the face of your subject. In the anchor shot, you have the most flexibility because it's a “staged” shot, so try filming where the subject is looking out a window (and your back is to the window) so, if the beginning of the event is during daylight hours, you'll get the benefit of the sunlight.



By combining a spokesperson anchor shot with short clips that illustrate the crowd, action, and guests, you can give your audience a timely, engaging visual summary of not only what happened at the event, but the reason for the event, and a wider message of your product launch or marketing theme.

So, there you go. There are some tips on how to shoot an effective event video that can really showcase your company's industry presence. ❖