



5 Essential Tips for Making Videos That Sell

As marketers, we're all constantly looking for ways to increase sales, drive traffic, and improve conversion rates. Few tactics can achieve these desired results better than a wildly viral video on YouTube or a carefully crafted sales message delivered directly to a prospects eyes and ears.

Here are 5 essential tips to improve the overall quality and effectiveness of whatever kind of video marketing strategy you choose to employ.

1. Start With the End in Mind

Videos allow us to visually tell a story, or demo a product; maybe become a familiar and trusted face...powerful marketing tactics to be sure but...

What is the actual goal?

Collect a name and email address?

Viewer clicks an affiliate link or a Buy button?

Establish trust and credibility?

A video that sells requires planning and job #1 is to determine what your Most Desired Action (MDA) is. Clearly define what that is FIRST...and create your video accordingly. For example. too many folks simply fire up some screen capture software (like Camtasia Studio) and start rambling along without a clear idea of what they are trying to accomplish! We've allseen videos like this, right? Talk about conversion killing! If you don't know what your viewer is supposed to do, how in the world will they?

Folks, this is NOT effective marketing...and your video efforts will suffer because of it.

2. Script it!

Now that you know what you want your viewer to do, it's time to compel them to do it. Most successful marketers would never dream of just tossing up a poorly worded sales page because they know - the sales copy matters! Yet, many of these same folks will spend little, if any, time deciding exactly what they will say and show in their videos!

Try writing a script for your narration and create a storyboard for things like screen and camera shots. Think of it as your sales copy...because it IS! Keep it short, interesting, relevant, and short. Did I mention short? Above all, try to make sure that all the content guides the viewer to perform your Most Desired Action.

Try using PowerPoint to create a "storyboard" for the flow of your video. Use slides for each "scene" including key talking points as bullets, images to tell your story, and your script copy in the Notes field. Let's face it - making a video that sells is basically making a presentation. Microsoft PowerPoint is a handy tool you may already own and be familiar with. Even if you just create a simple outline for your video, it's a good idea to have some

kind of a plan.

3. Rehearse It!

The fifth time you do practically anything will almost always be better than your first attempt. Take the time to rehearse your presentation! The more times you speak the words in a script, the more natural they sound. The more times you practice a software demo, the smoother and more polished it becomes. Stammering through your narrative or looking as nervous as a wounded gazelle in Hyena Town on camera may be unavoidable at first - but you will get better with practice! There is certainly no shortage of weaklyrehearsed and poorly produced videos on the internet today, but here's the thing:

As the novelty of internet video quickly fades, people will simply not tolerate lousy content because they have they have an increasingly staggering number of choices of what to consume! Will your videos be the ones they choose? Will you be the one to deliver the quality required to establish a long term business relationship with the much savvier web surfer of the VERY near future?

4. Ace the Audio

When it comes to actually recording your video, there are WAY too many factors to cover in this article. But there is one thing you can do to instantly make an otherwise even crummy video better: Make the audio great! I am constantly amazed at the number of videos I watch that are actually painful to listen to! Booming "P"s and "B"s or a starting volume level that makes your visitors ears bleed can create a first impression that you may never recover from. Low volume levels or "tinny" sounding audio full of room echo isn't as offensive but certainly won't rack up any professionalism points.

For videos made using a camcorder, an effective solution is to invest in a quality lavalier (or lapel) microphone. They can be used in almost any audio situation, plug directly into your DV camera, and excellent models from Sennheiser, AKG, and Audio Technica can be had for \$300 or less.

If you record you audio via computer (as in screencasting with Camtasia, webinars, etc.) consider ditching your sound card and that \$10 Radio Shack microphone as your audio input equipment. Google the phrase "USB microphone"and check out the very affordable option of studio quality results, including a killer microphone also in the \$150 or less ballpark.

But does audio quality really matter that much? Well, for videos delivered via a web page and played through computer speakers maybe not. But think about this - new technologies are changing the way customers receive their chosen content. Videos delivered to mobile devices will be commonplace soon. Try listening to your sales messages on a video iPod using headphones and see if it matters!

And be aware that the times are indeed a changin'...Things like AppleTV and Tivo video RSS feeds are here and are poised for widespread adoption. Can you say "Your own TV show" delivered directly to your customers HiDef widescreen TV and Surround Sound home theatre system?

The quality of your audio may make the difference between your program being watched on a consistent basis or being banished with a quick click of the remote control.

5. Leverage Your New Asset

In the end, if done properly, you will have created a valuable marketing asset. Make the most of it! Provide links to let users Digg, Del.icio.us, and StumbleUpon your new marketing masterpiece. Uploading to YouTube might make you famous but also posting it on the dozens of other video sharing sites (Google, Rever, Metacafe, etc.) will increase your reach substantially.

Try [TubeMogul](#) for uploading to multiple sites at once! It's free and dramatically increases your reach and efficiency.

Blog about your video and use relevant tags. Think about creating supplemental videos to engage your users in your sales process. For example, after they buy and arrive on a Thank You page, why not give them visual step-by-step instruction on how to best consume your product!

The bottom line is this - Don't shortchange your current and future chances of success using video as a sales tool by becoming an expert in mediocrity. Start using these tactics as a fundamental guide for every video you create and you'll be amazed at the improvement in quality - and profits - of your efforts.

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