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### Using Online Video To Create Your Own Private Media Channel

Posted September 2nd, 2008 by Cam Brown

There is probably no hotter topic among marketers than the addition of rich media to corporate or brand Web sites. While some might view this as another passing trend, to those who know what they're doing and why they're doing it, the addition of video to their sites becomes way more than just a gimmick or a vanity play. Today, compelling video content is a critical component to building any company's own private media channel.

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But what's a private media channel — and why should you have one? Good question.

A private media channel is any platform that you or your company uses to communicate directly with your audience. Whereas traditional third-party channels — magazines, TV, Web sites, radio, billboards and so on — were the middlemen necessary to put you in front of your prospects and current consumer bases, smart marketers are now creating their own channels to bypass a step.

Creating your own media channel offers two key advantages:

1) You have complete control of your content and messaging, which means you're no longer desperate to align yourself with someone else's content. 2) You no longer have to rent media channels by buying advertising space from media companies. I mean, why rent when you can own?

Now, back to video. Content-rich video can add much to a site, including interactivity and a deeper content well to engage customers and prospects. Specifically, online video can be used to bring products and services to life, especially those that are complex. It's easier to tell a story with some images and a narrator than to attempt to define with flat text — especially if you're introducing dense or complicated material. Technology companies often do this to explain in-depth services such as SOA and BPM.

Another great application is to bring your executives and staff to life, which in turn, makes your company accessible and personable. This is especially critical if you have a professional services company — the type where the assets leave the building every night. When prospective customers engage your company, they are buying your people. In this case, a 30- to 60-second introduction to your head of customer service is much better than the same old tired bio and photo.

Building a video content library on your site also allows you to bring in third-party experts to add value and credibility, helping to create an authoritative voice for your company. One of the basic tenets of content marketing (also widely known as "custom media") is building affinity with prospects and initiating permission-based relationships. This new dynamic allows you to compress the sales cycle and advance prospects to long-term customers a lot more quickly.

Now, how do you get prospects to your site to check out all this great video content? Well, one way is to use outbound emails with embedded videos to increase conversion and click-through rates. Email video technology has improved dramatically, and more importantly, has been proven to increase click-through. If you can get prospects to equate communications from your company with smart and emerging technologies, then they'll also make the connection that this is the type of professionalism they will enjoy as your customer.

For marketers, creating private media channels, and incorporating video content within them, are a few of the strongest hooks for engaging prospects, enhancing brands and improving the bottom line — all with measurable results.

 

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