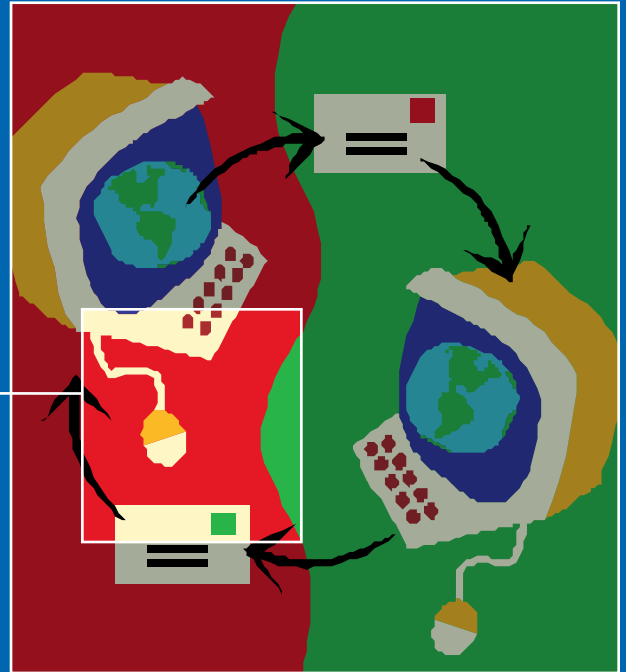


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Blue Papers



Harness the power  
of online video

## From the commercial age to the YouTube™ era

Whether you're catching the latest episode of your favourite TV show on TVCatchup™, checking out the latest trending videos on YouTube or watching a series of how-to training videos, there's one commonality: You're contributing to the 160 million viewers who watch online videos each year.<sup>1</sup> And, that number continues to grow, with no outlook of slowing down anytime soon.

The online video phenomenon has taken hold of Internet users worldwide for a reason: Online videos are, for the majority, more engaging, entertaining, emotionally moving and action-inspiring than their more traditional media counterparts. They're the old marketing adage in action: Show, don't tell!<sup>2</sup>

Although you may be accustomed to viewing online videos for personal reasons, the medium has plenty of business uses as well. When used effectively, they can boost sales, increase site traffic and generate leads for your organisation. In fact according to social media go-to blog Mashable.com, adding video to a Web site can drive 36 percent more clicks, 20 percent more inbound calls and more than double the time a user spends onsite.<sup>3</sup> You can't pass up results like these, simply because you may not know the online-video ropes.

In this Blue Paper™, we'll delve into the world of utilising online video for marketing your organisation. First, let's look at what makes online video so effective.



## Boom go the videos

By their very nature, people crave stimulation. Online video contributes to a user's web experience by offering stimulating content in a landscape that is usually motionless and limiting in engagement. Online videos thrive in marketing efforts when an organisation uses them to:

- Tell their story
- Tell their customers' stories
- Further explain a process, product or service
- Showcase a product (demonstrations)
- Provide a glimpse into organisational culture

John Jantsch of small business marketing how-to site DuctTapeMarketing.com

<sup>1</sup> Irwin, Aimee. "5 Essential Video Marketing Tips." IMEDIA Connection. Advertising.com, 27 Apr. 2007. Web. 31 Jan. 2010. <<http://www.imediaconnection.com/content/14596.imc>>.

<sup>2</sup> Anderson, Gary. "Beyond YouTube: Getting Started With Video for Marketing and Sales." MarketingPros. Netbriefings, 15 July 2008. Web. 31 Jan. 2010.

<<http://www.marketingpros.com/8/beyond-youtube-video-for-marketing-sales-anderson.asp>>.

<sup>3</sup> Rich, David. "How to: Create online video that works." Mashable. 2009. Web. 31 Jan. 2010.

<<http://mashable.com/2008/12/23/how-to-create-online-video/>>.

also shares a few additional ways to successfully utilise online video to propel business:

- Interview customers and capture testimonials.
- Interview employees regarding their positions and how they help customers.
- Record a greeting from the CEO.
- Record FAQs with real prospects or customers.
- Interview your key strategic referral partners.
- Create how-to videos and screen-casts to help demonstrate your expertise.<sup>4</sup>

Online videos are also worthwhile when they are complimentary to another piece of information that is already available elsewhere on- or offline. For example, let's say you have a downloadable spec sheet of a new product on your web site. Online video could help enhance the user's experience in learning about the product by showcasing a live demo of an employee or customer using it. You never know how a customer will prefer to absorb information, so the more ways you can tailor your media to their preferences, the better.

A word to the wise: Online video is not effective when it is simply another venue for showcasing offline commercials. A stimulating 30-second television advertisement will not perform in the same capacity or reach customers in the same way when put online. It may seem counter-intuitive at first, but your customers utilise television for different reasons than the web, and are looking for a more applicable presentation of information that speaks to these differences in media consumption.

According to Tim Street, digital video and social media marketing professional, online videos are most successful in gaining viewership and generating leads when they exhibit the following five characteristics<sup>5</sup>:

### #1: Spectacle

Spectacles are awe-inspiring occurrences that make the viewer want more, before the video is even finished! Showcasing the element of spectacle in an online video guarantees that viewers will experience wonder and disbelief, often inciting them to share the video with friends, simply to see their reaction and discuss its implications.

<sup>4</sup> Jantsch, John. "Creating and Using Web Video Never Easier." *Duct Tape Marketing*. 11 Dec. 2009. Web. 31 Jan. 2010. <<http://www.ducttapemarketing.com/blog/2009/12/11/creating-and-using-web-video-never-easier/>>.  
<sup>5</sup> Street, Tim. "Ingredients of Viral Video." *Inbound Marketing Summit 2009*. Boston. Oct. 2009. Speech.



## #2: Story

Storytelling is one of the most powerful ways to persuade customers, in online video and other marketing measures. When formulating the strategies for your online videos, brainstorm ways to add a story to the video's premise. Even if using a short anecdote, it will get the viewers further involved and intrigued by the remainder of the video's content.

## #3: Emotion

In the words of Street, "Emotions change the way we think about products and services." They are the triggers for most individuals when crossing over from the consideration phase to the purchase phase. When incorporating emotions, pick two of the following to concentrate on: Love, joy, surprise, anger, sadness, humour or fear. And, go all out! Don't simply go halfway—viewers will feel uninterested and unlikely to come back for more. If in the B2B realm, consider choosing humour, fear or anger as one of the two emotions—these are most likely to trigger action from your customers.

## #4: Conflict

Conflict and argument have long been a characteristic of society, and people are naturally interested in how they develop. In fact, news stories—which often encompass some sort of conflict—are the most-watched online video format.<sup>6</sup> If incorporating conflict into your online video, be sure it's displayed in a way that is respectful and tolerant, offering room for opinion on both sides of the issue. Try to resolve the conflict by the video's end, so as to not leave viewers with a sour taste in their mouths.

## #5: Questions

At the end of your video, you want to leave at least one question in the viewer's mind. That question could be in regard to what happens next, or where to turn for more information. Leaving questions on the table forces viewers to think about your organisation and its videos long after they've closed their browsers.

A great example of a popular online video that includes all of these elements is the infamous Susan Boyle of Britain's "Got Talent," singing "Les Miserables" "I Dreamed a Dream." Contribute to its already 86 million views by watching it here, and see if you can pick out all the elements that make it wildly successful. Although your company's online videos may not be as epic in proportion, you can still apply the same principles to make them equally effective with your target audiences in their own right.

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*



Now that you know what makes for an effective online video, it's time to focus on your organisation's strategy and how to implement it.

## Go forth and conquer

So far, we've shared many ideas on what makes online video successful and why you should begin to consider its integration into an organisation's marketing plan. But, before you dive right in...you need to develop your strategy.

First things first: Determine its purpose.

Why are you publishing the video?

What do you hope for it to cause?

What is the ultimate goal for your organisation's online videos?

What current void in your marketing are the videos filling?

Start with these questions to determine why video is needed in your marketing mix and how you plan for it to make a difference to your bottom line and customer relations.

Gary Anderson of [MarketingPros.com](http://www.marketingpros.com) gives the following words of wisdom to consider when determining the purpose of your new endeavour: "No matter what you do with online video, don't forget that the video is part of your marketing mix, not some standalone project."

He also advises to always keep the end-goal in mind:

"Think about how the video will encourage people to visit a Web page, call a salesperson, request more information or take some other action that you can measure and that contributes to your marketing and sales goals."<sup>7</sup>

The second step is to pick a focus based on what you feel your organisation is best-primed to offer.

Think of your video's focus like its "theme" or "style." The focus will depend on organisational culture, internal resources and employee strengths. Consider how much time you'll have to dedicate to the video production process. Also, begin to select teammates who can champion the online video front—this will ensure that the finished product is



<sup>7</sup> Anderson, Gary. "Beyond YouTube: Getting Started With Video for Marketing and Sales." *MarketingPros. Netbriefings*, 15 July 2008. Web. 31 Jan. 2010.  
<<http://www.marketingpros.com/8/beyond-youtube-video-for-marketing-sales-anderson.asp>>.

of peak perfection.

Finally, consider how your online video endeavours will work in conjunction with other elements of your marketing mix. Why will viewers want to pursue additional information or entertainment via online video over other current advertising or marketing efforts?

One of the most popular and successful ways to seamlessly incorporate online video into other media is by intertwining it with online social efforts—a topic we'll cover more next!

## Social media + online video = A perfect match

One key component to a successful social media campaign is audience engagement. What better way to foster online relationships than provide interesting videos that incite viewers to act? In fact, according to Nielsen Research, views of video via online social networking sites grew 98 percent in 2009, from 503.8 million minutes viewed to 999.4 million by October.<sup>8</sup>

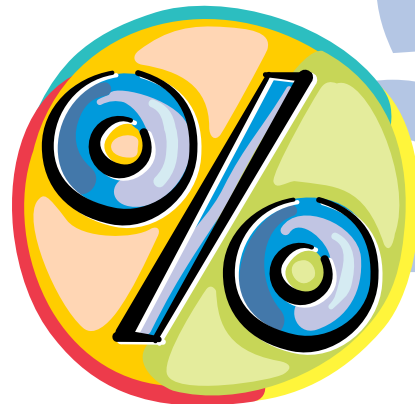
Try mixing online video into your social media efforts with a few of these ideas:

### **Create an online video “channel”:**

Most of the prominent online video sharing web sites—You Tube, Vimeo®, Blip.tv®—allow users and organisations to create a “channel” where they can house all of their uploaded videos. This is a great way to keep your videos neatly organised, as well as easily point customers to your channel's unique URL.

### **Share videos on social networks:**

Whether you have a presence on Facebook<sup>SM</sup>, Twitter<sup>SM</sup> or LinkedIn<sup>SM</sup> (or, maybe all three!), consider uploading videos on a regular basis for fan and friend viewing. The more places you can share your online videos the better, and such social channels are great places to get your videos seen and shared by others. Upload videos directly to Facebook using its video application, or link to your YouTube channel from your profile. If using Twitter, there are a variety of video services to consider, including TwitVid, Twiddeo and Twitc.



<sup>8</sup> “Social Media Video Viewing Up 98%.” MarketingProfs. Nielsen Research, 23 Nov. 2009. Web. 31 Jan. 2010. <<http://www.marketingprofs.com/charts/2009/3199/social-media-video-viewing-up-98>>.

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### **Use your blog's power:**

Many organisations have jumped on the blogging bandwagon at this point in the game. If this sounds like you, why not harness the power of an already active readership for online video? Embed videos within your blog to mix up the day-to-day written posts. Or, even consider switching it up and taping a video blog—or, “vlog”—on occasion to keep readers interested. We'll go over a few vlogging tips in the next section.

### **Incorporate into shareable press releases:**

Shareable press releases, also dubbed “social media releases,” are the next wave of online press releases. They contain not only the press release itself in written form, but also other shareable elements that relate to the story or publishing organisation. Include at least one easily embeddable or otherwise shareable video within your social media release to ensure all reader needs are met. Plus, it's an additional venue to promote the video itself!

### **Get customers in on the action:**

Rather than always taping, uploading and promoting your own videos, ask for customer help. Invite them to upload videos to your social network pages that encompass your brand promise, products, their experiences etc. You'll get a mix of videos, and the interaction and heightened engagement will make it well worth any complaint mitigation you may have to tackle. Plus, consider it this way: It's much easier to involve your customers in generating content than having to come up with the internal resources to do so on a regular basis.

As most of these tactics for incorporating online video are fairly easy to implement, let's take some time to delve further into the one that requires a bit more preparation and planning: Video blogging.

## **Vlog me happy**

Being on camera, even if the final product is only posted online, can strike a deep fear into even the strongest, most business-savvy individuals. But, have no fear: Video blogging simply takes practice. With lessened technological and production barriers than ever, anyone can grow into a successful video blogger. Think about it: Nearly all individuals have Internet access and many have access to Web cams—both pieces of the vlogging puzzle that weren't easily accessible even five years ago!

Sooner rather than later, once you begin practicing, you'll find your stride and begin to flourish as a video blogger. Start off your journey with a few of these





bits of advice, as inspired by MarketingProf.com's "Top Five Rules for Creating a Successful Video Blog for Business"<sup>9</sup>:

1. Be honest.

Just as in any blog post you'd write or other piece of content published, know your facts, remain ethical and maintain business integrity at all times. Every piece of content published online is easily shareable—especially if in a video blog format—so continue to be the value-driven person you are and let your honesty shine through your vlog post. Being honest, however, does not mean being blatantly offensive and tactless; be sure to always keep your viewers' feelings in mind, and approach opinion-oriented posts in a respectful manner.



2. Update regularly.

We understand how busy life can be—especially when working for a flourishing organisation! However, once you've committed to posting video blogs, we advise to keep posting new content on a regular basis. The definition of "regular" will vary from one organisation to the next, depending on other content being distributed online. As a rule of thumb, we'd recommend posting at least one new vlog post per month for starters, then working your way up to one to two per week, if you find it a feasible medium over written posts.

One way to ensure vlog posts are regularly disseminated is by consistently creating content, even if it's not "time to post." By creating a foundational back-log of vlog posts, you'll be prepared to sub one of the timeless pieces in when you may be otherwise too busy to come up with a new topic to vlog about.

3. Allow for commentary.

Although it may seem easier and less stressful to not allow comments on your video blog posts, blogging in its very nature welcomes commentary, and viewers will expect that functionality. Leave commenting open—both in text format and video response. Respond to comments in a timely manner—whether they be positive or negative. However, negative or varying opinioned comments are not the same as crude attacks, foul language or spam. If the latter types are posted as comments, it's okay to delete them. We'll touch more on the topic of commentary a bit later on.

<sup>9</sup> Altomare, Brent. "Top Five Rules for Creating a Successful Video Blog for Business." MarketingProfs. 27 Jan. 2009. Web. 31 Jan. 2010.  
<<http://www.marketingprofs.com/9/five-rules-creating-successful-video-blog-for-business-altomare.asp>>.



#### 4. Take risks!

Posting the same style video or consistently talking about the same topic can become boring to audiences and decrease the chance of retaining their viewership over time. So, mix it up a bit! Showcase pieces of your personal life, use out-of-the box humour or even comment on a popular news story that may not be directly related to your business or industry. Viewers will appreciate the variety and see you as a real person versus a “talking box.”

#### 5. Be yourself.

Going hand-in-hand with points from tip #4 above, always remember: To thine own self be true! Never put on an act when vlogging because, sooner or later, you’ll be exposed. Rather, showcase your true personality and let it shine brightly. This may take practice at first, but it will get easier over time. If it helps, go into each taping session with the mindset that you’re going to record the blog five times, no matter what. This will take some of the pressure off, and let you relax and be yourself.

A few other tips for the video blogger in-training:

- Kick off your vlogs with a bang—something interesting to pull the viewer in. You’ll have no more than 10 seconds to peak their interest so they stay for the full video.<sup>10</sup> Then, keep it flowing at a good pace—not too slow, but not speeding through the content.
- Keep the length short and sweet. We would recommend anywhere between one minute and four minutes, unless you have a good understanding of your audience and know they’ll stick around for longer.
- Focus on quality over quantity. Translation? Don’t create vlog posts just to have more vlog posts. Concentrate on the value you’re delivering to viewers and customers and what they’re getting from watching your videos. Otherwise, you’re just adding to the noise and could fade into obscurity fairly quickly.

## Lights, camera, action!

Now that you know a bit about the ins and outs of online video, why it’s a worthwhile marketing endeavour and how to make your videos resonate with viewers, it’s time to talk production.

When jumping into video production, there are hundreds—if not thousands—of video camera,



<sup>10</sup> Betancourt, Leah. “The Complete Guide to Video Blogging.” *Mashable*. Nov. 2009. Web. 31 Jan. 2010. <<http://mashable.com/2009/10/09/video-blogging/>>.

lighting, microphones and editing software options to choose from. We'll walk through the top choices for the novice video blogger in this paper. But, we advise you to continue your research on other advanced options once you go pro!

## Must-have #1: Camera

When it comes to the point-and-shoot cameras, there are plenty to choose from. Most run from £90 to £300, which is a relatively low price to pay for the amount of use you'll get out of it over time. Although you can use a built-in web cam or digital camera's video recording feature to tape videos for online use, we recommend investing in a piece of technology made for easy video recording, uploading and sharing.



When choosing your camera, keep a couple of these vlogger-recommended options in mind:

- Kodak Zi8 HD 1080p Pocket Camcorder  
Pros: Sharp and clean video in bright lighting, respectable video quality in low lighting, anti-shake mode, slimmer profile design, more versatile USB plug  
Cons: No internal storage, software is convenient but not powerful<sup>11</sup>
- Flip Video Mino HD 720p  
Pros: Great video quality for a camcorder this size, ultra slim yet functional design, easy to use, one-touch video uploading to YouTube, rechargeable battery, FlipShare software is compatible with both Macs and PCs  
Cons: Somewhat pricey, no memory card expansion slot, rechargeable battery isn't removable or replaceable, can't output HD to HDTVs<sup>12</sup>

In the end though, remember: If the opportunity arises for the perfect impromptu video, don't let your camera hold you back. Use your cell phone's video camera feature if you have to—it's about getting the shot and finding those spontaneous moments that will be online video gold to your customers.

## Must-have #2: Microphone

Most point-and-shoot camcorders have decent built-in microphones, so you shouldn't have to worry about sound quality in most situations. However, external microphones can be useful when consistently taping from the same location or video blogging at the computer. They offer a much clearer sound quality

<sup>11</sup> Herrman, John. "Kodak Zi8 1080p Pocket Camcorder Review: Your Move, Flip." Gizmodo. 3 Aug. 2009. Web. 31 Jan. 2010.

<<http://gizmodo.com/5328408/kodak-zi8-1080p-pocket-camcorder-review-your-move-flip>>.

<sup>12</sup> "Flip Video MinoHD." CNET. Ed. Dave Carnoy. 14 Nov. 2008. Web. 31 Jan. 2010.

<[http://reviews.cnet.com/digital-camcorders/flip-video-minohd-black/4505-6500\\_7-33392113.html](http://reviews.cnet.com/digital-camcorders/flip-video-minohd-black/4505-6500_7-33392113.html)>.

than internal microphones, yet can be less portable at times. Try out your video camera's microphone first to see if there will be an issue before investing in another microphone solution.

### Must-have #3: Lighting

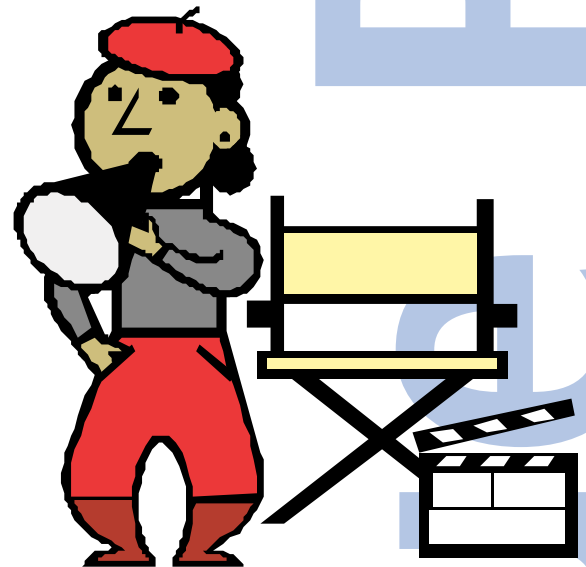
Lighting is an important element to consider when recording videos for online and offline use. With poor lighting, even the best set-ups can fall flat. Before beginning to record, do a lighting test on the subject (whether it be yourself or someone else) to ensure a crisp, well-lit quality. Then, adjust as necessary: Reposition to yield better to natural light, move indoor lamps toward your subject or even invest in a more professional lighting option if you plan on taping many videos indoors where lighting may be hit or miss. Remember that good lighting adds energy to your videos—something you can't afford to lose!

### Must-have #4: Editing software

Nine times out of ten, editing will enhance a videos quality—even if it is just minor tweaks. With careful planning, your editing needs will be low, but you will still benefit from having a programme on hand to co-ordinate transitions, adjust volume, tweak brightness and splice pieces together.

Many computers—both Mac and PC—come with pre-installed basic video editing programme. These are perfectly fine to use for very fundamental editing needs. However, if you're looking to do a bit more with your videos prior to uploading, you might consider these options as reviewed online by Webuser<sup>13</sup>:

1. Sony Vegas Movie Studio HD Platinum
2. Magix Movie Edit Pro 16 Plus HD
3. CyberLink Movie Suite 8
4. Magix Video Easy
5. CyberLink Media Show 5
6. CyberLink Power Director 8
7. Sony Vegas Movie Studio 9
8. iLife 09



### Uploading videos

There are oodles of choices online regarding where you should upload your videos. However, the venue itself doesn't matter as much as keeping them all in one place does. Your videos need a "home base" of sorts, so customers and key

<sup>13</sup> <http://webuser.co.uk/products/software-reviews/1/video>

audiences aren't forced to search for videos in multiple locations.

YouTube is one of the most popular and heaviest hitters online. Individuals and organisations alike can create a unique "channel" that serves as a platform for their uploaded videos. Other popular video uploading sites include Blip.tv and Vimeo—both of which offer easy-to-use interfaces, simple features and plenty of viewership.

A few points about file size and formatting: You will not usually run into problems with file size if your videos are kept under 10 minutes (which is true for most successful online videos). However, always check the stipulations of your video uploading site first, prior to spending time uploading files. For example, YouTube caps their file size at 2GB, so you may need to compress your files before uploading for optimal speed. As for the file format itself, also check into the site's accepted types. This list is usually located within the "Upload" Web page or dialog box.

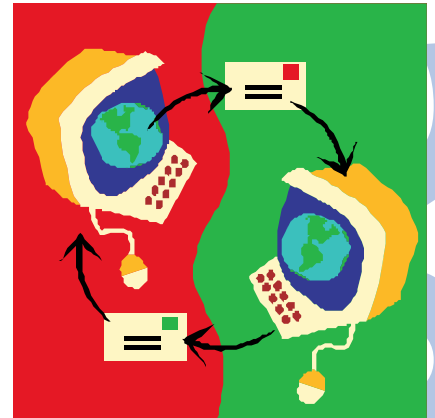
Other elements to be aware of when uploading to sharing sites are the video's title, explanation and tags. These three components are important to your online video's success, as they control how often videos are found via search engines. When a user searches for your video—be it on a web-wide engine like Google or a site-specific engine like YouTube's search—the search engine combs the video's title, explanation text and tags to find matching keywords. The more closely you can match these elements to what potential viewers will search for (while still maintaining relevancy), the higher chance you'll have to increase video views. You have the opportunity to formulate all three elements when initially uploading your videos, as well as via an "edit" feature at any time.

Finally, after you've chosen a site to house your organisation's videos, don't forget to link to them from your main web site, blog and other social networks. The more places you have them, the better—it gives your audiences additional opportunities to see them and share them with their own networks.

## Commenting and engagement

Congratulations! At this point you will have formulated your online video strategy, chosen a focus, recorded, edited and uploaded your video. Now, it's ready to be viewed and shared among audiences.

What usually happens next is viewers commenting and engaging with your videos. Videos that receive comments are often times ones that spark controversy, drive emotions or are otherwise very relatable. Be prepared to receive a slew of both positive and negative comments. In a perfect world, you'd receive only rave



reviews, but many viewers are apt to voice their negative opinions first—it's just human nature.

Whether your comments are positive or negative, always be sure to respond. Take a similar approach to how you would respond to blog comments, social media posts and replies or other customer feedback.

### **Continually monitor comments and conversation**

When commenting is slow, it's much easier to allocate internal resources to keeping up with the conversation. However, when times are busy and commenting is heavy, it's wise to set up another type of online keyword monitoring. Whether you choose a free option like [Google Alerts](#) or a paid option like [Radian 6](#), available in the UK through 6consulting<sup>14</sup>, it'll be worth the investment.

### **Respond in a timely manner**

Never let a comment go more than 48 hours before responding, if possible. If the comment demands more immediate attention, respond to it as quickly as you can to avoid further controversy. By responding swiftly, you show viewers that you care about their responses and encourage future audience engagement.

### **Address any issues of brand hijacking head-on**

According to notable Web Strategist Jeremiah Owyang, "brand hijacking" can be defined as: "When customers and the marketplace take your brand and create their own messages or experiences and share it with others."<sup>15</sup> Unfortunately, the most popular online videos and their organisations are usually those that are subject to brand hijacking. The Better Business Bureau offers a few tips of advice to organisations when dealing with online rants<sup>16</sup>:

1. Pick your battles. When choosing rants to respond to, look for ones that are less than a few days old, on prominent sites and are about problems that you can solve.
2. Offer full disclosure. When defending your company online, don't pretend to be an unbiased consumer. Tech-savvy individuals can easily deduce who is behind comments, so it's best to be honest and admit you

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.socialmediamonitors.com>

<sup>15</sup> Owyang, Jeremiah. "Responding to Bad Press using Video, and Video Brand Hijacking." *Web Strategy*. 27 Feb. 2007. Web. 31 Jan. 2010.

<<http://www.web-strategist.com/blog/2007/02/27/responding-to-bad-press-using-video-and-video-brand-hijacking/>>.

<sup>16</sup> Fleming, Paula. "Responding to online customer complaints." *The MetroWest Daily News*. 8 Sept. 2009. Web. 31 Jan. 2010.

<<http://www.metrowestdailynews.com/business/x1750353476/Responding-to-online-customer-complaints>>.



represent the company.

3. Take the conversation offline. Keep online responses polite and direct, and ask the customer if you can contact them directly by e-mail or phone to discuss the details of their complaint.
4. Don't say anything privately that you wouldn't want public. Just because you've taken the conversation offline, doesn't mean that your e-mails and phone conversations won't end up on the Internet, so always remain polite and professional.
5. Follow through. Don't drop the conversation when resolving a dispute, and always keep promises. Consider providing an extra perk, such as coupons, after the issue has been resolved.
6. Know when to walk away. There's no satisfying some angry customers and, at times, an organisation can only offer a sincere apology and walk away from the conversation.

Being part of the online conversation surrounding your videos is just as important as the videos themselves. Showcase your commitment to connecting with audiences, listening to their comments and addressing their concerns. You do a great job doing so offline, so why stop there?

Diving into the world of online video can seem a bit overwhelming at first. But, you'll soon find it to be similar to any other type of marketing medium: With a solid strategy behind it and tangible goals set, it becomes a much easier task to tackle. Concentrate on the basics first, then work your way to more advanced tactics and promotional techniques. We know you can do it, and we'll be watching your online videos soon. Good luck!



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