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Zoom in on Video for Increased Web Exposure

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In May 2008, Google introduced "unified search" and began weighting web sites with strong video, audio and news content in its search engine returns. This is big news to anyone interested in keeping their company's website page ranking high on Google, the number one search engine on the web. Consumers as well as businesses are looking for a multimedia experience online, and the proof is in the stats. Websites rich in video content are more often searched than sites with static text and photos.

According to a study released by comScore, one of the leading companies measuring digital traffic, in May 2008 US Internet users viewed, on average, 12 billion online videos a month. This is an increase of 45% from a year ago and equates to four hours of online video viewing a month compared to three hours a month only a year ago.

Especially for the Millennial Generation (an estimated 70 million consumers (those born between 1980 and 2000), video has become their preferred source of entertainment and news, sourced from either their computers or mobile phone technology. Spending upward to \$172 billion a year, these consumers are accustomed to responding to information presented via web-based video, especially when it is presented as entertainment.

Infotainment is the New Competitive Edge

Think about it. Web-based video can be used to build key brand attributes and personality. It is a way to capture attention in those first crucial seconds when a prospective consumer first visits your site. That's why more and more companies are doing a better job by making video front and center on the home page, rather than burying it deep within their site. Plus, a video that explains in layman's terms how to install an exhaust system, shot in a garage scene in real time, with all the potential for mishaps or shortcuts learned from years of expertise, is both informative and entertaining (infotainment), far surpassing the impact of downloaded printed directions.

Getting up to Speed

If your company is short on web-based video, there are many ways to cost effectively create content. Research any past television coverage your company may have received and contact the cable station or network for the right to use the video for your site. Offer to work with your business trade organization on an electronic public service announcement with the understanding that you would like to have the PSA to use for your company site. Or develop a contest that encourages your consumers to send in video with the caveat that the best video selections will be used on your website.

Multiple Use Amortizes Cost

Video can have multiple purposes. While you might not have \$20,000 in your budget for a new training video, often you can justify the expense for the production of a three minute "how-to" video when it can be put to multiple uses, i.e. company website, sales presentations, a training program/DVD, uploaded to related websites, or used as a closed loop presentation at trade shows.

If your company has considered a cable TV buy, make sure that in the negotiation process you secure the right to use the video on your site and other purposes such as in-house training. Most cable companies are open to this agreement and will provide a Beta tape (first-generation master) with the understanding that it is not to be used on competitive media.

Web-based video should be a key component of your current media kit. Start by developing a video strategy as part of your marketing plan. Video will only continue to grow in the next decade. Now is the time to be creative and sharpen your competitive edge by increasing your company's potential for exposure on the web.