



A GUIDE TO PRODUCING COMPELLING INBOUND MARKETING VIDEOS



Equinet
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INTRODUCTION

Video content has the power to be one of the best assets on your website.

In a recent HubSpot Content Trends Survey a staggering 54% of respondents voted video as the form of content they most like to see from a brand or business.

And in a similar study from Forbes, 59% of executives agreed that if they were given the choice of reading text or viewing a video to explain the same topic, they would be more likely to choose video.



So, what is it that makes video such a popular medium?

- A well-crafted video tells a story. It gives your prospects a “peek under the lid” of your company.
- It’s an opportunity to share what’s unique about you. It adds a human element to your product or service. What’s more, the combination of visual and aural stimulus helps to deliver messages more effectively, and leaves a more memorable impact, than even the most succinctly written content can.
- Video gets to the point. Video is easy to consume, and it’s a reliable medium for simplifying complex ideas. It helps your prospects become educated about your products.
- Timing is everything though: in a recent Animoto marketing survey, nearly two thirds of respondents said they preferred a video that was 60 seconds or less. And perhaps not surprisingly, the shorter the video the higher the retention rate.
- While the average video tends to keep 37% of viewers engaged right to the end, videos that are 90 seconds or less average a 53% retention rate. At the other end of the scale, videos of 30 minutes or more result in just a 10% retention rate.
- Video strengthens your authority. Video can build trust and help to position you as a thought leader in your industry.

- It communicates to your prospects that you're a knowledgeable brand, with an eye for technological trends and an understanding of consumer preferences.
- And the more that you're perceived as an expert or innovator, the more your prospects will want to come back for more.
- It sparks action. Video can strengthen your existing inbound marketing activities by boosting conversions. The inclusion of video on a landing page for example has been demonstrated to increase conversions by 80% or more.
- It produces measurable results. According to HubSpot, 51.9% of marketing professionals name video as the form of content that offers them the best return on investment (ROI).
- Marketers who use video grow revenue 49% faster than non-video users. And research shows one in four consumers lose interest in a company if they don't have video.
- Video is informative, digestible and easily accessible. It helps to build trust and establishes authority. And it's a proven method of achieving higher engagement with your prospects, speaking to their needs and converting them to customers.

The steady rise in video's popularity has transformed video production from novelty to necessity for the most successful inbound marketing strategies.

The upshot is, join in, or get left behind.

Inbound marketing is driven by a consideration of your target audience and their likely mood, interests and expectations at each stage of their buyer's journey: awareness, consideration, and decision.

Strategically creating video for different stages of the inbound methodology will help strike a chord with tentative prospects. Tailoring your video production to your audience can also increase viewership and improve your ROI.

As with any inbound marketing strategy, the success of your video marketing relies on you reaching the right audience at the right time.

The buyer's journey will equip you with all the intel you need to do so. Knowing what kind of video to make, and where to incorporate it in your inbound marketing campaign, will ensure that you get a return on investment.

Later in this eBook we will look at different types of video for each stage of the inbound methodology. But first, let's look at how to write a script for video.

HOW TO DEVELOP A VIDEO MARKETING SCRIPT

Video marketing scripts cement focal points, highlight project requirements and provide the entire video production team with a clear understanding of the objectives and core message of the video shoot.



Know your audience

Detailed knowledge of your ideal customers will help you customise a video script to address their needs and interests.

Ask yourself these simple questions to develop the initial framework for your script:

- Who is my target persona?
- Where are they in the buyer's journey?
- What is the primary purpose of our video?
- What value will it bring to our viewers?
- What should the viewer's next steps be?



Don't waste time

Analysis of drop-off times for video shows that wherever viewers remain beyond the first 3 - 10 seconds, it becomes more likely that they'll still be watching around 30 seconds in.

Incidentally, one of the most potent video marketing metrics is "watch time" - i.e. how much of the video your viewers consume - so there is plenty of incentive to try and keep viewers glued.

One way to hook viewers from the start is to indicate what's in it for them. Are you solving a specific problem, promoting your brand or telling a story? What information is your audience looking for, and what will they find here?



Tell a story

Powerful stories are the best way to pique viewer interest. They can also function as a segue to bigger, more complicated ideas.

Kicking off videos with a story compels people to stay with you and witness what will unfold. We love closure, and personal tales help to build an emotional connection with the viewer.

Small touchpoints help humanise corporate video. Use your script to break down barriers by sharing something personal.



Show consistency

Your videos need to remain consistent. Treat your video projects as an extension of your branding. Develop a 'look' and stay true to it.

Before you begin writing your script, revisit your video marketing strategy and choose a format to work with - this will help you stay consistent.

Whatever style you choose, break your script into manageable sections. Following a classical narrative structure (beginning, middle, end) will help you clarify your ideas and improve your writing process.



Write for the spoken word

A video script is written to be spoken.

Limit your sentences to no more than 15 words and use an active voice as opposed to a passive voice - this will help streamline your point.

Storyboards and visual references will help the production team visualise the scene. Explicit notation regarding camera angles, soundtrack, animations, overlays and other elements will help enormously in production.

Remember, the narrative tone of your video should mirror your project goal. Keep your buyer personas in mind and write as if you were in conversation with them.

Try reading your script aloud, slowly and with natural pauses. This will help highlight tongue twisters and give you an approximate video duration.

Your script isn't finished until you can read it without a stumble.



Optimise your script

It's important to optimise your video script for search engines.

Your title is an obvious place to describe your video and demonstrate relevance - it is also a metric that improves rankings on both Google and YouTube.

Include your main keyword and keep your title under 66 characters, this will ensure your descriptive text doesn't become truncated in search results.

Videos including transcripts rank higher and provide more substance for crawlers to glean information from. That means your video script will benefit greatly from a sprinkling of relevant keywords.

Your video description is another convenient place to include the long-tail keywords and backlinks that fortify your rank.



Include a compelling CTA

Prompt your audience to engage by using a relevant CTA. Here are some popular examples:

- Contact us
- Subscribe to channel
- Follow / Like page
- Share
- Comment
- Visit blog
- Landing pages

Ending with a CTA is a non-interruptive way to usher your prospects forward.

By understanding your target audience's needs and making it easy for them to take the next step, you will motivate your audience to progress along their buyer journey.

The success of your video marketing is greatly affected by the quality of your script so don't scrimp on the time and energy you assign to writing it.

Now, you understand the importance of having a video marketing strategy, and how to produce a script, let's look at different video styles for each stage of the inbound methodology.



AWARENESS STAGE VIDEO

For many prospective buyers, this will be their first encounter with your business. First impressions count enormously.

The primary goal for awareness stage videos is to drive interaction. This involves opening up a dialogue with your audience and inspiring feedback through likes and comments, as well as the encouragement of social sharing. To support this, include eye-catching social share buttons and CTAs that help drive the spread of content.



Turn your blogs into vlogs

If you'd like to create more video content, but aren't sure where to start, the answer may be as close as your most popular blog post - have you considered turning your old posts into videos?

It makes sense to repurpose written content. The idea is already there, your research is complete and the optimisation has been refined - all that's left to do is alter the platform!

Video blogs, or as they're more commonly known, 'vlogs' are an informal, conversational way to get your message across to potential customers.

Vlogging makes the most out of your content and opens up traffic generation from an entirely new segment of people who may be in the early stages of their research and unready yet be ready to spend time reading your content.

As with blogging, the purpose of your video should be crystal clear. You will need to edit your written content for brevity, but ensure you convey all of the necessary information to get viewers interested in taking the next step. Then provide a specific call-to-action that will help them progress along the buyer's journey.

Keep in mind that written word sounds different than spoken word; you may have to adjust your language to keep the video feeling natural. Use personal expressions like "you" and "we", and don't be afraid to pause. Addressing viewers directly builds an emotional connection and holds attention.

Blogs are not the only written source you can utilise. If you have published an eBook, you could further explore topics by creating a video series that features key points as chapters. Again, either a talking head or off-camera approach would work. Or, create a taster video of eBooks for your landing pages to encourage people to download.



Bitesize content provides no-strings contact with your target audience, so it is perfect for the awareness stage.

In this increasingly saturated online domain, attention is difficult to grasp and maintain. When it comes to video, you are likely to have lost a third of viewers by the time the first thirty seconds have lapsed - and then half as much again by the one minute mark.

Here are some things to consider when making a bitesize video:

Script

Even when your videos are short and sweet, be sure to optimise your script carefully around a topic. Include language that captions easily. Keep it fun, entertaining and informal.

Consider creating a bitesize series focused around one topic. The benefit of post-production means that you can take complex issues and break them down into manageable chunks.

Sound

Many videos on social media autoplay without sound so it is important your video makes sense with or without audio.

You can add music or sound effects to accentuate your point, but it has proven more effective to use visuals to draw people in.

Research shows that the majority of videos on Facebook are watched without sound, and 80% percent of people will react negatively to mobile ads that interrupt them with sound.



Production

Bitesize content is short by nature, but that doesn't mean your film day has to be: remember the power of editing.

The benefit of approaching bitesize content as a video series is that you will achieve a consistent look and have lots of content to fold into your content calendar. It's much more cost efficient too.

You can afford to get creative with bitesize content. Time Lapse video is a fun and affordable way to create dramatic visuals, and bitesize video might be the right opportunity to share an insight of your workplace.

Alternatively, you could take the chance to show off a product, or introduce a team member.

Whatever your subject, keep it refined. Choose one core message and execute it well.

Visual appeal

Text can be presented in the form of text overlays, lower thirds, graphics or presentation slides.

Captions do more than improve understanding, they attract the eye and inspire your audience with things to tag or say when they share your content.

Powerful imagery increases viewership tenfold. It has been proven our brains love visual content and intelligent use of colour, which is why infographics have always enjoyed so much success.

Bold colour is arresting and makes your video pop. If possible, colour grade your piece. This will make a tremendous difference to the overall feel of your video.

Thumbnails

Thumbnails represent your video visually, and during the awareness stage, it may deliver the first and only impression of your business to your prospect.

Research suggests that people respond best to ads with minimal text on the initial image. This proves that sensitively curated pictures stand out from the crowd. Choose yours carefully to communicate the content of your video and attract the right viewers.





CONSIDERATION STAGE VIDEO

By this point, your buyer personas have identified their problem and committed to researching the solutions available to them. Your videos need to demonstrate an understanding of their pain points and arm them with the knowledge they need to make an educated decision.

As the prospect becomes more proactive in their research, they will develop more patience and willingness to listen to the options available to them. HubSpot research shows conversion rates increase by 64% and revenues by \$21K per month thanks to the production of an explainer video.



Explainer video

Explainer videos are rapidly becoming the go-to solution to help people better understand your product, vision or service. An explainer video's main intention is to convey your business message in 60 - 90 seconds.

They are one of the most popular options available for commission by video marketing professionals - and with good reason.

Your buyers are becoming increasingly independent. When faced with an issue, 68% of people would prefer to watch a video as part of their decision making process as opposed to speaking to support staff or Sales. Video is the pitch that is always ready.

Use the data you have collected about your target audience to determine what information they would find most useful. Ask your customers, analyse blog metrics, look at your frequently asked questions and speak to your customer service team to identify the most common questions your audience have.

Find something that can be discussed coherently in a short amount of time. Best practice within the industry is to aim for no more than 150 words per minute.

DECISION STAGE VIDEO

Now is the time to convince the prospect that your product or service is the best solution for their problem. By now your buyer personas will have shortlisted vendors or products that they are interested in and will be almost ready to purchase. They may just need a final nudge to pick you.

Prospects will be interested in how your company resolved specific issues. Video is an exceptional way to tell genuine stories, and sometimes it's not just the marketers that have them.

It won't have escaped your attention that more and more businesses are using video to explain their products or services. And for good reason. Video marketing metrics show an increase in conversion across several channels - but don't forget that the best video content marketing strategies are buyer-centric.

Use a targeted approach informed by the buyer's journey and grow your business with video marketing.



Customer testimonial video

Customer testimonials are frequently used by marketers to increase conversion rates, yet they don't necessarily have to be delivered in a written format.

The best video testimonials are ones that are credible accounts of a personal experience that somebody has had with your product or service.

They essentially take the form of a customer story, followed by branding and a call to action.

A good candidate for a customer testimonial video would ideally be someone who is at ease on camera, able to improvise, confident and full of energy.

However, the most important thing is the customer and their story: prospects are looking for a human element in your marketing and want to be able to relate. Nervousness on camera can be coached, but enthusiasm and appreciation are hard to fake.

Your sales team might be able to help you find a customer that fits the bill, and if they have developed a strong business relationship, it may even be sensible to ask them to reach out personally to request an interview.

To set your customer at ease ensure you manage their expectations of the day. When asking them to participate in your testimonial video ensure you explain:

- Who will be present during the shoot and what their roles will be
- What they should wear, bring and do
- Where the shoot will take place. Will it be in an office or work space, or would you benefit from hiring a special venue?
- When they will need to be on set and whether there will be any downtime

In the case of a customer testimonial, your purpose is to provide the stage for an authentic, heartfelt comment on the way your company operates. This could take the form of a story, an interview or casual conversation.

In contrast to explainer videos, it isn't necessary to compose a full script.

However, your speaker doesn't necessarily have to fly blind. You can make them more comfortable by providing interview questions.

Here are some example questions to get you going:

- Who are you and what do you do?
- What problem led you here? Tell us how you found us.
- How did we change things for you?
- What does life look like now, how have things improved?
- Why did you choose us?
- What has been your experience working with this team?
- Do you have any advice to share with people who may be facing the same struggles you were?

Try not to interfere with the content of what your customer is saying because, whatever their approach, a customer with genuine warmth towards your business will inspire confidence in viewers.

For the most part, a customer testimonial will take the form of a talking-head video which will emphasise the personal, human element of your piece.

However, you might like to highlight quotes or use text overlays to provide context. Graphics help people to absorb the information, they appear in preview windows, they make for a good screen grab and they add a visual interest.



B2B case study video

A case study is more detailed and data-driven than a customer testimonial.

Product reviews, real-life user stories and case studies are more relatable and trustworthy than a catch-all sales pitch.

Comments about your business from your customer base are unbiased and often rooted in a shared experience. The power of social proof can drive sales.

Each case study is unique - every customer has a different story to tell. However, there will be strong parallels between the case studies and your prospects' experiences. Exploring shared barriers will enable your prospects to envision doing business with you.

The strongest testimonials come from clients that have been surprised and delighted.

You may see people switching to your services after becoming disillusioned with your competitors. These stories translate well to screen, and their history can be used to highlight your competitive advantage, ultimately swaying purchase decisions in your favour.

You will need to request permission to feature your customer in a case study video, and then manage their expectations of what is required of them and when. Here are some points to consider:

- The reasons you are creating this case study
- How the video will be used and where it will be placed
- Why you would like them to feature
- The project timeline
- Information and trademarks you wish to include that may need special permission (name, company, job title, logo, images)
- Their input beyond the completion of the case study video. Do you wish them to act as a referee? Will you have their permission to provide contact information for that purpose? Are they happy to share or host the video?
- A guideline of what you require from them on the day of the shoot. This includes things for their comfort (timings, lunch arrangements, dress code), as well as anything they will need to do in advance to prepare for the shoot
- An indication as to whether or not they will be compensated for time or travel
- What it means to your business

After your business case study speaker agrees to join you in your video marketing campaign, it would be courteous to send them a collection of example interview questions so that they feel prepared.

Ask open-ended questions and encourage your customer to answer in full sentences. If they can include the question you have asked in the answer they give it will make it easier for the editor to work around.

Here are some sample questions for each section of your case study:

Decision-making process

- Tell us about the challenges you were experiencing before finding us
- How did you hear about our product or service?
- What attracted you to us?
- Can you describe your decision-making process?
- What was most important to you while you were comparing options?
- Did you look at alternative solutions, and if so, what were their perceived shortfalls?
- What is likely to have occurred had you not found us?
- Describe how you have benefited from using our product or service

Onboarding

- How long did it take to implement?
- Did our team meet your expectations?
- Who was involved in the process?

The Solution in Action

- How the customer is using your product or service
- Is there a particular aspect of the product or service that you rely on most?
- Who uses the product or service, and who benefits?

The Results

- How is the product or service helping you today?
- What has changed for you?
- How much have you increased metrics X, Y, and Z?

Send the case study video to your customer for approval before you publish online.

HOW TO MEASURE YOUR VIDEO MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

As with all of your inbound marketing activity, the impact and ROI for video is measurable.

Intelligent feedback improves your video marketing strategy, both in terms of sharing and promoting your current assets, and in terms of streamlining future production.

Here are some metrics you should be tracking.

Reach

The number of people who have stumbled upon your video. Take this metric with a pinch of salt. Reach only presents you with the potential sphere of influence. The trick isn't actually in reaching people - it's in reaching the right people, at the right time, in the right way.

Total views

What constitutes a 'view' differs across platforms. Here's the criteria set by popular social networks:

- Facebook: 3 seconds
- Twitter: 3 seconds
- Instagram: 3 seconds
- Snapchat: Immediately upon opening
- Youtube: 30 seconds
- Periscope: Immediately upon pressing play, or after 3 seconds for autoplay

You might argue that views are hard to measure success by because you ideally want more than 3 seconds of viewer's time, but it's a promising metric. Statistics show that first impressions are formed quickly.

Completion rates

This is the number of times a played video reaches completion. It can be disheartening to witness your carefully made video abandoned mid-stream. Establish campaign messages and brand identity early on, treasure attention and, of course, use strong visual cues to keep viewers glued. If you plan to include a CTA don't bank on viewers finding it nestled at the end.

Interactions

Regular interaction with your viewer base helps you better understand who is showing an interest in your business. Being helpful and vocal about your expertise in a field helps to boost your standing as a thought leader and encourages people to connect with you.

Shares

Shares are interesting from an optimisation point of view: they prove that gripping headlines, high image quality and concise description really does matter to video. If you have lots of views and relatively few shares, your content simply isn't resonating.

Play rate

The percentage of visitors that clicked play to watch your video shows several things: the strength of the copy and optimisation around your video, the allure of the topic itself, and whether or not the placement (or channel you are using) is suitable.

Traffic

Video is a strong weapon in your inbound marketing arsenal and can be used to direct visitors to specific landing pages, or to encourage them to interact with your business, opening up opportunities for them to move down the sales funnel.

Engagement

Average percent watched and average view time are both examples of engagement metrics. Studies by Google/YouTube found that when people watched 30 seconds or more of a video there were major improvements in behavioural and attitudinal trends: 45% higher consideration, 14% higher favorability & 19% higher purchase intent.

Video length

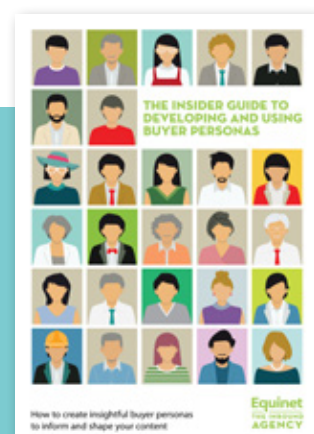
Video length should be assessed in conjunction with completion rate. Are your videos the right length? When there's disparity between length and completion rates, warning bells should ring.

Conversion rate

The happiest metric! When all is said and done, high conversion rates are the sign of a healthy video marketing project.

NEXT STEPS: CREATING INSIGHTFUL BUYER PERSONAS TO INFORM AND SHAPE YOUR CONTENT

Develop and use buyer personas to attract your ideal customers and win more business. Follow our three-step guide to creating a content plan to nurture prospects through the buyer's journey.



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