GUIDE

Social Video Strategy

5 steps to creating videos that make an impact
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Eight billion daily video views on Facebook. Over 1 billion YouTube users. Social video is beginning to dominate almost every platform—and it’s only getting bigger.

Between extraordinary moments caught on camera, pop culture phenomena, big-budget videos, and unexpected viral hits, there are millions of videos competing for your audience’s eyes every day. Can yours stand a chance of winning any attention?

Growing an audience and engaging with customers through social video can be a reality for any business. In this guide you’ll find insights and advice that will help you tackle social video, from planning and creating content, to distributing your videos and measuring the impact they have on your business.
1. Decide what you want your videos to achieve

Producing videos for social requires an investment of time and money—an investment that your business will want to see a return on. Knowing what you want to achieve from the start will help you narrow down content ideas, measure success, and make the most of your investment in video.

Every video you create should be aligned with an overarching business goal, such as creating brand awareness, rewarding loyalty, increasing brand advocacy, driving entries to a contest, or generating leads.

2. Get creative with video content

Unless you’ve hit a viral homerun with one of your advertisements (think Old Spice), people aren’t logging on to social media hoping to find commercials for your product or service. Instead, try creating videos that educate, entertain, or inspire people in order to capture attention.

“Every company that makes a product or delivers a service has at least two fundamental stories to tell with video.” says Evan Aagaard, senior video producer at Hootsuite. “One of those is how to use your product or service, and another is who is using it—and why.”

“Before you make big budget ads or fancy long form documentaries, make sure your business has a strong and continuously evolving library of tutorial content and customer or community stories. This is the type of evaluative content you want prospective customers to discover when they’re searching for information about your brand.”
**Educate**

To buy, sell, and admire handmade or vintage goods, many people turn to Etsy. When it comes to video, Etsy produces educational content that stays close to this core business. Videos demonstrating how to make your own hot sauce or holiday gift wrap provide practical value for Etsy’s audience, while still aligning closely with the brand.

For example, WestJet took viewers into a hangar for a time-lapse video of their new, Disney-themed aircraft being painted with images from the movie Frozen. The video is fascinating to watch, and has racked up almost a million views. In contrast, a less entertaining (and more promotional) video of the same airplane has earned significantly fewer views.

These videos help showcase the products and stores available on Etsy, which is helpful for driving web traffic and sales. According to Google, searches related to “how to” on YouTube are growing 70% every year, and nearly one in three millennials have purchased a product as a result of watching a how-to video. Teaching your audience how to do something and helping them solve a problem through video can have a big impact on the bottom line.

Create video tutorials to demonstrate your products or tips for a DIY project. Upload recorded webinars or conference sessions that your company was involved in, or make it interactive by creating a video featuring your CEO answering questions that you’ve solicited from your customers on Twitter or Facebook.

**Entertain**

Creating a video that showcases your latest product can be an effective piece of marketing collateral, but going one step farther to find a more entertaining angle can make the difference between a video that a handful of people watch and one that thousands of people share.

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An example of an educational video from Etsy

WestJet’s entertaining video of its Frozen-themed plane being painted

**Inspire**

Saroo Brierley was a young boy in India when he became separated from his family at a train station and was eventually adopted by a couple who raised him thousands of miles away in Australia.

Saroo used a combination of his faint childhood memories and Google Earth’s satellite imagery to track down his hometown and reunite with his family. Google featured Saroo’s story in a video that tugged on people’s heartstrings while simultaneously showcasing the power of its products. The video illustrates Google Earth’s technology without heavy brand messaging, and the uplifting story makes it memorable and shareable.

People are naturally inclined to share things that move them. Videos that inspire people—whether that inspiration comes as a result of feeling sad, frustrated, empathetic, or joyous—are highly shareable and help you make emotional connections with your audience. Using your existing customer stories to make these emotional connections will allow you to tell a story about your brand through video that people can easily identify with.
3. Get more views and exposure for your videos

It’d be nice, but simply making a video won’t cause views to start rolling in by the thousands. How you distribute your video on social is just as important as what type of video you create. Here are some strategies for increasing the views and impact of your videos on social when you’re ready to share them with the world.

**Cross-promote videos on all social networks**
Publishing links to your videos across all of your social networks can help people easily discover your video content and, ideally, share it with their own followers.

**Have a consistent video format or theme**
Consistency in your videos will help create brand awareness and familiarity, and give your audience a reason to continually seek out your video content.

*Moz*, a marketing analytics software company based in Seattle, does a great job of this on YouTube with its *Whiteboard Fridays* series. These videos have a consistent look (the company’s founder standing in front of a whiteboard) and purpose (a high-level explanation or tutorial of a digital marketing concept) that gives Moz’s audience a reason to subscribe to the company’s YouTube channel.

“You need to give people something recognizable and dependable they can return to,” says Evan Aagaard. “This could be as simple as always using a charismatic host or producing your videos with a unique sense of humour and consistent visual style.”

**Repurpose top performing content into videos**
The content team at BuzzFeed are masters at repurposing a piece of content to gain more views and extend its life on social. For example, they recently asked their community what amount of food could be bought for $1 USD around the world and compiled the answers into a blog post that featured photos and captions. They then used the same answers to create a video which has been viewed over two million times on Facebook.

Using content that has already had some success on social to produce videos is a good way to capitalize on the buzz and keep momentum going. A blog post, photo series, or collection of Tweets could potentially be repurposed into a successful video, or at least serve as inspiration for new video ideas.

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**How Hootsuite Helps**

- **Save time with one platform.** Hootsuite makes it easy to find, publish, and quickly share video content across all your social networks from one place.

- **Schedule video content in advance.** Whether you’ve created a month’s worth of videos in one session and want to space them out or have a mixture of owned and unowned video content to share, using Hootsuite to schedule video content in advance will help you stay consistent and reduce your workload.

Get started with social video in Hootsuite
4. Grow and nurture your video community

A high number of video views is one thing, but growing your subscribers and followers is what will truly benefit your social video strategy in the long run. Creating an engaged community should be as big of a priority for you as creating high-quality video content is.

**Monitor and manage comments**

Responding to Tweets and Facebook posts is almost second nature for most social media marketers, but video comments (especially on YouTube) often go unanswered by brands or get buried by spam. A lot of valuable discussion can happen in video comments, so monitoring and managing them should become a part of your daily social media routine.

**Find and share videos from others**

Your customers may be creating video content related to your business (such as tutorials or reviews) that could be valuable for your audience. Share these videos with proper credit, and you can develop relationships with the original creator while providing your audience with new video content that you didn’t have to produce yourself.

*An example of how Hootsuite connects with customers in YouTube comments*

**Leave comments on other videos**

Find videos that are relevant to your industry or brand, and monitor the comments for any opportunities to start conversations or answer questions. This will show that you’re actively listening, and willing to engage with your audience in places beyond your own social media profiles.

*How Hootsuite Helps*

- **Leave no video comment behind.** Using Hootsuite you can monitor, moderate, and respond to comments on your videos while collaborating securely as a team.
- **Discover and curate relevant video content.** Set up search streams in your Hootsuite dashboard to find videos and conversations relevant to your brand.

*Get started with social video in Hootsuite*
Collaborate with influencers or publishers
Well-executed collaborations with other brands or influencers can have a big impact on the reach of your social videos.

Look to partner with influencers who are already fans of your brand, or have a genuine interest in your product. Their followers should have interests and values that align with your own, so that your videos provide entertainment and value for both audiences. This way, you'll ensure that your collaboration benefits both the influencer's personal brand as well as your business.

Unilever combined all of its hair care brands into one marketing campaign (a first for the company) and collaborated with prominent beauty vloggers and YouTube personalities to launch its “All Things Hair” YouTube channels. A consistent stream of videos were produced that featured the influencers giving styling tips, tutorials, answers to common questions—all while showcasing Unilever hair care products. Since the messaging came from trusted influencers from the community, it never veered into being too salesy or overly promotional. Since launch, the channels have gained hundreds of thousands of subscribers, helping to position Unilever and its brands as credible experts with go-to products for hair care.

Things to remember when collaborating with influencers:
- **Clarify expectations.** Like any business relationship, clarity is key. Approach the influencer with a rough idea of what you’re looking for and work together to clearly outline roles and responsibilities.
- **Be flexible.** Don’t micromanage the video’s production. Remember that you’re working with someone’s personal brand, leveraging their authenticity and relationships to reach a new audience. Protecting your brand is always important, but the right partnership should still allow them to be themselves.
- **Have a budget.** Although influencers aren’t A-list celebrities, no one should be asked to work for free.

Collaborating with publishers on co-branded video content is also a good way to tap into new audiences while getting access to the type of production resources you may not have otherwise. Many brands have found success working with publishers like BuzzFeed and Refinery29 that have a strong focus on social video content.
5. Track the ROI of your videos

While tracking the number of views and shares your video receives is an important way to understand whether or not your content is resonating with your intended audience, you still need to connect the performance of your social videos to the bottom line of your business.

This is why setting objectives for your videos that align with your business goals is so important—it gives you a real business case to measure the success of your videos against. If you included a promotional code at the end of your video, for example, you could directly track the number of times it was redeemed to illustrate video’s impact on sales.

How Hootsuite Helps

- The YouTube Analytics app offers valuable insights on a per video basis into engagement levels, trending content, content discovery methods, playbacks, countries and sources of traffic. You can also track channel subscriptions, demographics, geographic information, and more.

Get started with social video in Hootsuite
Social Video Strategy: A Breakdown By Platform

There's a big difference between the type of video someone would want to watch on their mobile device while riding a crowded bus compared to at their desk during lunch, and platforms that would be a better fit for each one.

Understanding these nuances and catering to them when producing social video will help ensure you maximize the potential that each platform offers. Figure out which social video platforms are the right fit for your social video strategy, and then create video content with each one in mind.

Things to keep in mind:

**YouTube:**
- **Use the tools available.** Things like annotations, links, descriptions, titles, and tags can help your videos reach more people. [This blog post](#) covers how to use these tactics in more detail.
- **Shorter is better.** Although YouTube is still a good fit for longer videos, top performing videos on the platform are just under three minutes on average.

**YouTube with Hootsuite:** Manage YouTube alongside your other social networks. It's simple to share videos across your other social networks, schedule and publish videos, and quickly reply to comments.

**Facebook Video:**
- **Keep autoplay in mind.** Videos on Facebook play automatically (without sound) for the majority of users, so the first few seconds of your videos need to be visually engaging enough to catch someone's attention and make them stop scrolling. Aim to create videos that could be watched in their entirety without sound and still have an impact.
- **Make it mobile-friendly.** More than 65% of video views on Facebook come from mobile. That represents over half of your potential views, so it's essential that you optimize your videos for mobile devices. That means they should be easily viewable on small screens (no one wants to squint).

**Facebook video with Hootsuite:** Upload videos to increase your Facebook engagement and track your growth with visual reports.

**Twitter Video:**
- **30 seconds or less.** Twitter is a quick-moving platform, so it makes sense that the time limit for videos is short and sweet.
- **Try both pre-planned and real time.** Upload your professionally produced marketing videos to Twitter, but also try experimenting with real time content like video responses to questions your audience sends in via Tweets.

**Twitter video with Hootsuite:** Publish and schedule Twitter videos and monitor comments as a team right from Hootsuite.

**Instagram Video:**
- **60 seconds or less.** This time limit makes Instagram a great platform to share a snippet of a longer video you've created, while encouraging people in the caption to visit your YouTube or Facebook profile to see more.
- **Hyperlapse.** One way to pack more into a short video is using Hyperlapse, Instagram's app that allows you to easily create timelapse videos.

**Instagram video with Hootsuite:** From scheduling videos to managing multiple Instagram accounts as a team, Hootsuite gives you new creative ways to grow your audience.

Get started using social video in Hootsuite
Endnotes


