THE DISTILLED GUIDE TO ONLINE VIDEO MARKETING
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WHAT IS VIDEO?

Websites are typically constructed with up to three aesthetic elements, used to communicate messages to an audience:

- **Visual** - created with Images & CSS styling
- **Aural** - created with music and voice over
- **Conceptual** - created with text

This presentational format is no accident, as it mirrors the building blocks of artistic and creative expression that have been a constant for thousands of years:

- **Visual Art** - expressed in painting & sculpture
- **Aural Art** - expressed in dance and song
- **Conceptual Art** - Expressed in literature and poetry

In its most basic form, video is the integration of these aesthetic concepts - an abstraction of the aforementioned primary art forms into a secondary integrated whole, an artistic work experienced conceptually, and perceptually simultaneously. It’s image (visual), music (aural) and story (conceptual) all rolled into one. If sculpture could be surmised as three dimensional painting, then film/video is two-dimensional theatre.

This is how video should be approached when we begin thinking about the web - not as a type of content which is an interchangeable format to text and image, but an integration of these elements, demanding full time-bound attention from an audience.

Over the past few years, faster connection speeds have allowed the smooth streaming of HD web video on both desktop and mobile devices, making video instantly accessible to web users and a necessary form of engagement for brands and small businesses alike.

WHY IS VIDEO VALUABLE?

The value of video is threefold:

1. **Improved User Engagement**
2. **Brand Awareness**
3. **Search Engine Optimization**

   a) Generating more traffic through rich content signals and rich snippets
   b) Improving conversions
   c) Building links
   d) Having a presence on video search engines
Reading is an active experience. As you are reading this guide now, you are choosing the speed at which you take in the words, the moments where you pause to consider the statements and in which order you view the sections. Your journey through the content is very much self-determined and follows the following cognitive process:

- Perception
- Appraisal of meaning
- Evaluation of meaning
- Emotional response

This might look like…

- I am reading about online Video Marketing
- Video Marketing is the process of promoting an entity online through video
- This could be useful for my company
- I am excited to learn more

However, video as a medium, allows a user very little freedom in terms of consumption – it’s easy for users to skim read text and decide which sections are most relevant to them. Video offers no ‘skim-read’ option – you either watch the video in its entirety, or it fails to hold your attention and you stop watching. Additionally watching a video is a somewhat passive experience. When users decide to press “play”, they are asking to be shown something -- asking to be given the content in an integrated, multi-disciplinary form -- rather than digging through the content and exploring the meaning themselves.

Video is therefore a different method of engaging audiences than image and text. With video, the experience of comprehension is more immediate, driven by the trio of story-telling elements available and the deterministic nature of the restricted timescale. The amount of information that can be displayed through one second of video vastly outnumbers the amount of information that can be read. This means the emotional response - the kneejerk reaction - often comes before the full appraisal of the content or the comprehension of the meaning.
Consequently, video allows you to generate instant emotional connection with an audience, helping you to build influencers quickly and efficiently from agnostic parties; but conversely can also earn you detractors just as quickly. As such, the video you create must achieve that instant emotional engagement, otherwise you risk turning off potential influencers and customers.

“If a picture is worth a 1000 words, then a video is worth a 1000 words, 25 times a second.”

**CASE STUDY OF VIDEO & ENGAGEMENT**

Tracking engagement over the past 6 months on the SEOmoz.org daily blog, we can see that posts with videos have a significantly higher average time on site than those without videos.

Posts with videos see an average time on site of 5 minutes 29 seconds, while posts without videos see an average time on site of 4 minutes 46.
The same increased engagement is mirrored when we compare social shares based on media type.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media Type</th>
<th>Facebook Likes</th>
<th>Tweets</th>
<th>Google +1’s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Posts with Video</td>
<td>639.72</td>
<td>2372.47</td>
<td>327.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posts without Video</td>
<td>480.82</td>
<td>1881.06</td>
<td>253.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Video posts seem to perform cumulatively better on social networks than the more traditional blog post format, and this is particularly true on Facebook.

**Value 2. Video Assists with Branding**

Through video, one is able to recreate the experience of being face to face with someone much better than through audio, image or text. Through moving likeness and recorded image, we can display much of who we are, as people, through physical and verbal expression. For branding, this is extremely important - as it allows companies to display a “human” side considerably more efficiently than through image, audio and text.

Due to the relative low uptake, online video can also indicate professionalism and brand quality - if a company has enough time, money and skills to create high quality video, they are often perceived as a legitimate business with a genuine interest in providing a great service.
VALUE 3. VIDEO OFFERS POSITIVE SIGNALS TO SEARCH ENGINES

Video is also an extremely valuable resource for SEO (Search Engine Optimisation), as it assists with the following goals:

a) Generating more traffic through rich snippets

In the Google search engine results pages (SERPs), thumbnail images are sometimes attached to the results to indicate that the web page contains a video.

These image augmented results typically have higher click through rates (more people click on them) than standard results, meaning getting “video rich snippets” can be a fantastic way of increasing traffic for a website.

By including video on your site and implementing the correct technical mark-up, it’s possible to get these augmented search results.

b) Improving conversions

Through increasing engagement and trust, video content can be a great way of driving greater conversions, particularly on commercial pages. This is the main reason why product videos have become popular in the E-commerce world – as a method of improving the rate at which users click “add to basket” and complete a full purchase.

c) Link Building

Links continue to be an important metric with which search engines determine the authority of a piece of content, seeing referring links as akin to “votes” for various pages around the web. Search result rankings are then based on a combination of relevancy (determined by the content and terms used on the page) and authority (determined by the number of referring links and social shares).
Casey Henry from SEOmoz ran a study in October 2009 which calculated the number of inbound links pointing to SEOmoz blog posts based on media type - discovering that pages with a mixture of media types and form, particularly those containing video, generated more inbound links than plain pages with only images and text.

**WHEN DOES VIDEO WORK**

The most common mistake made by individuals and companies creating video is to view video as content akin to blog posts or interactive graphics - rather than as a form and media type.

*Text is to blog post what....*
*Image is to infographic what.....*
*Video is to product demonstration/ advert.*

*Image is to infographic what.....*
Video is an integration of text, image and music towards a unified goal, functioning effectively when these elements are symbiotic rather than disintegrated.

Therefore, video is not necessarily an appropriate form for every kind of idea or story. If you ever find yourself trying to “convert” content into a video, rather than developing the video idea organically, then it’s often an indicator that things have gone awry in the creative process.

Luckily, there are two easy ways of determining whether or not an idea will work well as a video. The first is to ask:

*Would this content lose something if it were just text and image?*

A great example of this is with the “Will it blend” series of videos from BlendTec.

It’s quite clear that simply displaying images of an iPad being put into a blender along with accompanying text would not have the same appeal or visual punch as the physical demonstration of blending an iPad.

The second question which should give an indicator of appropriate content type is:

*Does the idea or content require aesthetic as well as conceptual engagement?*

If an idea requires a visual or aural element in order to be interesting - this is a clear indicator that it could work well as a video. Conversely, if you find yourself adding in the visuals as an afterthought - this is a clear indicator that the idea will not work well as a video.

This is the case with the GAIQ videos created by Google for those practicing for the Google Analytics Individual Qualification.

The content here is ultimately not appropriate for the form. It’s text heavy, conceptual and poorly paced to aid the primary purpose of the content - comprehension and learning. The visual display adds nothing to the experience, being just a list of text. The GAIQ videos (sorry Google) are prime examples of videos that would work better as text blog posts with accompanying images.
The key to coming up with a killer idea, irrespective of style or goal is adhering to a rigorous creative process that lets the story, rather than the medium of story-telling, drive decisions about appropriate form and core goals.

1. **Content Gap Analysis** - What do people care about? What might work in your niche? What have other people done in different verticals?
2. **Form Gap Analysis** - What style of content is appropriate for your idea? Is video really the right form?
3. **Work Out What You Want to Achieve** - Pick out the core purpose of your content. Should you build different bits of content to achieve different aims or can you hit all your goals with one bit of content?
4. **Develop Your Idea** - Who is your target audience? What style of content will work well to achieve for your goals?

### CONTENT GAP ANALYSIS

While video can be an extremely valuable asset for businesses with an online presence, it’s not always going to be the best form for every kind of content and every type of business.

Typical failings in the creative process come when companies decide to do video before they have relevant and appropriate idea for the content it will contain.

### COMMON PRACTICE (THIS SUCKS)

**STEP 1**

**Form Gap Analysis** - “we need to do a video”

**STEP 2**

**Form Idea Development** - “what can we do a video about?”

**STEP 3**

**Content Creation** - “make video”

The skill to creating great video is in working out when and where to use it, focusing on identifying and filling content gaps rather than form gaps.
Core content gaps are usually readily identifiable; typically determined by the needs and wants of your target demographic against the knowledge, expertise and USPs you have within your organisation.

A great example of successful content gap analysis is the online retailer, Zappos. Zappos recognised that individuals often struggle to make decisions about purchasing shoes and clothes online – as they are unable to determine by technical specification alone, whether or not the items would fit or would work well for the purposes they had in mind. Zappos observed that individuals need to make an emotional connection to personal products such as shoes before committing to a purchase.

Zappos figured out that a great way to close this disconnect and improve the experience of their customers would be to offer personal advice and testimonials from their staff – such as you might get if you were to walk into a physical store and ask for fashion advice. To date, Zappos have created over 200,000 product videos.

“The goal behind Zappos product videos is to help establish an emotional connection with our customers and it’s really to help them make a better decision.”

Laurie Williams, Senior Manager of Photo & Videos for Zappos

Does your product fulfil a need demanded by the market place? Do you have experience or talent in your company that others would be interested to learn from? Is there anything your target audience requires, not currently provided on the internet?

Further content gaps can be discovered using the following methods:

Keyword research

Using the Google keyword research tool, you can find demands for both commercial and informational content within your vertical. To discover content demands, input a selection of keywords with “broad match” selected and explore the ideas Google offers up alongside the relative search volume to determine possible gaps. For more information about undertaking effective Keyword Research, check out the module in our online training platform DistilledU.
Competitor Analysis

What successful marketing content have your competitors created? Are there any obvious knowledge gaps which are yet to be filled by your competitors, both online and offline?

Analysis in Different Verticals

Look for successful content in other industries that you can replicate. Have you seen anything excellent recently that could easily be transposed to a topic in your industry?

FORM GAP ANALYSIS

Once you’ve identified a content gap, you should have a fledging idea in the making. It’s at this point where you work out whether or not your idea is going to be best served in a video or another media type. Oftentimes you may begin the creative process imaging a video or a blog post, and later to decide that a different form may be the most appropriate method of communicating that story.

Ask yourself - Would this content lose something if it were just text and image?

If the honest answer is no, then video probably isn’t the right form for this idea. However, if you cannot imagine your idea having impact in any other form than video; if combining imagery, text elements and audio feels integral to the concept – then you should feel confident in picking video as your chosen form.

If you’ve decided your idea is going to be best served with video, you can begin to visualize some finer aspects of how this video will look, where it will live and how it will be structured. Should this be an episodic series, or a single linear piece? Something for a stand-alone webpage or content designed to augment and improve an existing page? Will the audience require certain knowledge prior to watching the video?

WORK OUT WHAT YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE

The next task is to formalize what you hope to achieve, based on this aforementioned list of marketing values achievable with video.

1. Improved User Engagement
2. Brand Awareness
3. Search Engine Optimization
   a) Generating more traffic through rich content signals and rich snippets
   b) Improving Conversions
   c) Building Links
   d) Having a Presence on Video Search Engines

If you’ve selected more than one of the above values, you should also start to think about whether you can achieve those different aims with a single piece of content, or whether you’ll have better success splitting the goals and targeting each with a different kind of video. The decisions here will define both the appropriate technical implementation for your video and the key performance indicators with which you will measure its success.
DEVELOPING YOUR IDEA

The style and type of your video should be developed organically starting with the core aim(s) you’ve defined.

1) Improving User Engagement

To do this, content will need to be thought-provoking, provide useful information or creative value and invite further action following playback.

An important factor in improving user engagement is working out the appropriate placement of video content on the page -- optimising the user experience and design to encourage people to watch and respond to the video. Additionally, when launching the content, making space for things such as social responses and comments can be a great way to elicit better user engagement.

A fantastic example of this achieved successfully is the SEOmoz whiteboard Friday series.

Whiteboard Friday is a weekly release from SEOmoz, where short-form informational tips are given out by a speaker in front of a whiteboard. The ideas espoused within the videos are covered point by point, and therefore serve as a fantastic starting point for debate and discussion in the well-orchestrated community framework.

2) Branding

To improve brand awareness, you either need to create a fantastic and engaging “ad” for your company and service, build out some extremely creative pieces that will generate buzz as a consequence of the creative value or create informational content valuable to your target community. Invariably, you’ll want to be putting such content on YouTube and social sharing sites, where it will get in front of the most eyes, so you should also consider what kind of content will work specifically well for those forums and communities.

For more advertorial pieces, interviews with members of staff work well to improve brand trust, especially if you’re a new organisation without a strong identity. If you can combine this method with slideshows or animation for informational (not heavily promotional) content, then you can create great content very simply that works to express brand identity and convince potential customers of a USP. These videos can be humorous, subversive, serious or somber – but ultimately always need to emotionally engage with an audience instantly in order to generate traction. For paid placement “pre-roll” or “in-stream” ads specifically, time restrictions mean these videos need to be short, to the point and get the message across fast – ideally having the core of the message played out within 30 seconds.

The following examples stand as excellent videos for branding:

- Tippex - A hunter shoots a bear
- Old Spice – Believe in your Smelf
- Behind the Scenes at Huddle HQ
3) Search Engine Optimisation

a) Conversions and/or Rich Snippets

Improving conversions is usually achieved through the product video model; with videos created specifically for relevant commercial landing pages to aid users in their decisions about purchasing, or taking the next step in a conversion funnel. The importance here is about enriching an existing page or section on a site with content that provides easily digestible information or entertainment.

Videos created to extol the virtues of a specific product or service can be great for this, but what shouldn’t be used with the goal improving conversions are promotional “ads”. Ads are an invasive, outbound form of marketing, designed to attract attention to a product or service. If a user is already on your website, then they have already partially bought in to your company and are at the very least, interested to know more. In this case, hard-selling the virtues of your company is typically unnecessary and can turn an otherwise captive audience off.

Below are two examples of content working well to secure rich snippets and improve conversions.

★ Amazing Gravity Defying Phone Holder – Ideas by NET

“The video was a great success for us, not only did we receive lots of links and increase our social media engagement, we saw a considerable effect on bottom line sales, with an increase of 300% which helped us achieve new contacts and subsequent sales. We also saw a shift in our rankings. The home page jumped up 2-3 spots on some of our key terms and the product page now ranks number #1 for the product name.”

Lianne Froggatt, Digital Marketing Executive - Ideas by Net

★ SearchLove Trailer - Distilled

“Having a trailer on our events page allowed us to get a video rich snippet result and jump from fifth to third in the Google rankings for the term “SEO Conference” in the UK. This increased our organic search traffic for this term by 32% month on month.”

Tom Neville, Product Owner - Distilled

Google is essentially impartial about the style of videos it will reward rich snippets for – However, it is normally the case that pages you are most concerned with improving rankings and click through rates for are commercial pages with a monetary value attached to them. These pages are normally best served with a product video.
b) Building Links

In order to get links, content has to be relevant to a specific audience demographic who have control of a wider presence across the web. It has to engage with this community well enough so that they will see specific value in promoting it via links or embedding it on their site.

More than any other goal with creating video, building video for links dictates that the content must be absolutely exceptional. People don’t embed mediocre videos. If someone embeds a video on their site - it has to be because they want their readers to temporarily disengage from their own content and spend time watching yours.

However, exceptional does not necessarily mean exciting or flashy. People will link to and embed useful resources as much as they will beautiful imagery. Below are some examples of content styles which work well for this “video as linkbait” approach:

- Video as Infographic - Anatomy of a computer Virus
- Technical “How To Videos” - Making Future Magic

b1) News Releases

Video News Releases can be a great way of getting links from high authority news sites, as the added media element helps to ensure that your press release makes it to the top of a journalist’s pile. VNR’s can be relatively cheap and easy to produce, typically combining a mixture of interviews and testimonials with shots and footage of the subject matter in question.

“VNR, Videos News Releases hold a new focus in today’s news world where publications are trying to do everything they can to make their news dance more online. The realms of static text predefined by the nature of print publication no longer exist in an online world.

In bygone times the most exciting thing an editor could do to jazz up a story was place a cracking image with it. Equally PRs looking to get their clients placed in the public eye would often go to great lengths to secure a good image to go with their story, knowing that a good image would give their story a competitive edge, providing video clips to the media to use online can provide similar leverage.

News publications are fighting to make themselves profitable, resources are tighter than ever before, if you can provide good video content to go with your story and sell it in with your story (via VNR) you are helping them do their jobs better.

Many sites are creating video only sections (if they dont have them already) yet they do not get the same amount of video content sent to them as they do ‘story ideas’ and images, hence the market for getting onto this area of the site is less saturated, should you be able to professionally pitch your video content (hence VNR)”

Lexi Mills, Head of PR – Distilled
c) Presence on Video Search Engines

The YouTube and Vimeo communities value a plethora of content, from answers to informational queries to pictures of cute cats – but, no matter what the style of the content, successful videos invariably always do one of the following:

- **Entertain**
- **Instruct**
- **Provide useful or interesting information**

Entertaining videos normally offer one or a combination of the following elements: humour, visual aesthetic appeal or an impressive display of skill. Humorous videos usually keep to a simple structure, following either a repeated gag in numerous different circumstances, or follow a traditional aural joke structure with a narrative build-up to a single punch-line.

Videos that instruct can come in the form of tutorials, tips, lectures or visual guides, while those that provide useful or interesting information exist to serve a particular community or interest group.

To succeed on these sites - you need to think about targeting a specific subset of the overall audience - **who will want to search for and watch your video?** Consider that most people who view your videos through video sharing sites are unlikely to have prior knowledge of your brand or marketing efforts. This means that you need to consistently work for their attention - ensuring each creation is interesting or entertaining in it’s own right. Examples of this done successfully:

- **Move** – STA Travel
- **WordPress for Small Businesses** – Simply Business
There are fundamentally two options with hosting – seed it into the community (YouTube, Vimeo and other community sites) or secure the content on your site (with third party hosting or self-hosting). The first option will result in greater views, shares and coverage, while the second option will result in directed traffic through search and shares or links pointing to your site.

Below is a summary for each of the main hosting methods, listing the respective advantages and disadvantages.

**YouTube**

YouTube should be seen primarily as an avenue for branding, reputation, notoriety and to help content “go viral”. You should always be creating some content for YouTube, even if you are focusing on building content for other platforms as well.

**Advantages:**
- Will get the content in front of the greatest number of people
- Gets indexed very quickly and will typically rank well
- Content is often socially shared, allowing great creative pieces to “go viral”, which in turn can result in lots of branded homepage links
- Embedding the video may allow the page on your domain to rank with a video rich snippet through implementing schema and submitting a sitemap (though this is by no means guaranteed and YouTube.com may also receive the rich snippet for your video).

**Disadvantages:**
- Cannot secure content
- Social shares, embeds and links will typically point to YouTube
- YouTube.com may often rank instead of your domain, especially if the content is very successful
## Vimeo

Vimeo functions in almost the same way as YouTube, having similar advantages and disadvantages and should be used only in conjunction with YouTube. The community pages only really support creative content and nothing with heavy elements of branding or commercial intent. Vimeo also offers a low-cost third party hosting package (Vimeo Pro – Link Vimeo.com/pro), but this should be seen as a fundamentally different service to the main Vimeo video sharing community, as it’s not possible to seed video through the Vimeo community pages whilst maintaining control over the content.

### Third Party Video Hosting

Third party hosting using services such as Wistia, Brightcove or Vzaar are essentially ways of securely hosting content without requiring the development resource to build out a player and cloud delivery system for the content.

**Advantages:**
- ★ You can choose where content gets embedded (restricting domains and thereby ensuring links point to your domain)
- ★ You can drive social shares and traffic to deep pages on your own site
- ★ Can implement a video sitemap and schema to ensure pages receive video rich snippets
- ★ Content will appear as unique videos to Google, making a page seem richer

**Disadvantages:**
- ★ Content will almost certainly not “go viral”
- ★ Flash based embed codes are often needed for content to be indexed by Google, but these are often not mobile device friendly

### Self-Hosting

Self-hosting is the ideal for any company with time and budget wanting to create video for conversions or links, as you can build out beautiful pages by integrating the video seamlessly within the rest of the page, simply as another media type. It takes time, can be expensive in terms of bandwidth, but allows for additional creativity.

**Advantages:**
- ★ You can choose where content gets embedded (restricting domains and thereby ensuring links point to your domain)
- ★ You can drive social shares and traffic to deep pages on your own site
- ★ You can implement a video sitemap and schema to ensure pages receive video rich snippets
- ★ You can ensure content is mobile friendly
- ★ You can add unique HTML5 elements, such as page actions triggered by point in the video.
- ★ Content will appear as unique videos to Google, making a page seem richer

**Disadvantages:**
- ★ Content will almost certainly not “go viral”
The decision about where to host should be made primarily based on where the content in question will best perform. Dry product videos, for example, will invariably do badly on YouTube, due to the lack of context or sales funnel for any audience viewing the content on YouTube.com. On the other hand, hosting fun, creative video on your own site means the likelihood of “going viral” and generating social buzz is significantly reduced. The way the content is embedded and promoted should then depend on the marketing goals for the content.

There are three approaches:

These approaches are nuanced and do overlap, but the essence of the appropriate technical implementation for each is summarised as such:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Content Style</th>
<th>Suitable Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand awareness, Virality</td>
<td>Promotional and/or creative</td>
<td>★ YouTube</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>★ Other Social Video Sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>★ Google Display Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conversions, Increased traffic</td>
<td>★ Hosted on and restricted to your own Site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somewhat Promotional (soft-sell)</td>
<td>★ Hosted on own site, but allow others to also embed the content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-promotional and/or creative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Choosing the Location and On-page integration

1. **Ensure you embed only one video per page you want the rich snippet for.**

   Having a single video will give Google a clear indication of the image they should use as a thumbnail and will also allow you to target multiple keywords for rich snippets by spreading your content across numerous pages.

2. **Include the videos on pages ranking reasonably well in the organic search results, ideally on the first page and driving traffic for relevant keywords.**

   Use your Web Analytics package to determine the pages driving traffic that may be benefit from the addition of video content.

3. **Ensure the page is a suitable entrance point for your chosen conversion funnel.**

   This will vary based on your site structure and business, but a typical entrance such as a product page with a clear “add to basket” icon on-page.

4. **Ensure the page is targeting a relevant term likely to receive a video rich snippet.**

   Use the following tool to ascertain the viability of a video rich snippet.

   ![Video Rich Snippet Keyword Research Tool - Distilled](Distilled)

   **Note:** You must be logged into Google to view this document and please make a copy if you wish to edit.

   Input the keyword or phrase you are considering targeting and see if any video snippets are currently being returned for that term. If there are video results, then you can be certain that a video on your page has the potential to generate a rich snippet for that keyword. If no video results are currently being returned, this doesn’t necessarily mean your page won’t be able to rank with a rich snippet, particularly if the term is relatively uncompetitive and without a saturation of video content across the vertical. In these instances, holistically appraise the nature of the keyword, the competition you face and then make a value judgement as to whether to term is worth targeting accordingly.

   To get started with your brainstorm of possible keywords to target - consider using phrases around the following terms, all of which typically do provide video results:

   - Tutorial
   - Review
   - Test
   - What is…?
   - How to....
   - Demonstration
   - Explanation
   - Video
Once you’ve put together a shortlist of relevant terms that you may be able to get a rich snippet for, input this list into the Google Keyword Research Tool and choose terms with the highest search volume.

5. **Place the video prominently on the page**

Ensure the video is included prominently on the page, ideally above the fold, with a frame size of at least 320 pixels wide.

### Hosting

Either self-host your videos, or use a paid secure hosting solution, such as the recommended options below (Details Correct August 2012).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>Wistia</th>
<th>Vzaar</th>
<th>Vimeo Pro</th>
<th>Brightcove</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White label embed codes (CNAME)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain restrictions (restrict where you can embed it)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customisable player</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto-generate Video XML sitemaps</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call to action link at end of video</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytics</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>API</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you are self-hosting; using either your own servers, or a cloud solution are both suitable options. For cloud solutions – Amazon’s Cloudfront with S3 storage is a reliable and reasonably priced system.

### Embedding

1. **Ensure the content cannot be embedded outside of your own domain**

You always stand the best chance of getting rich snippets if you can keep the content unique to your site, giving Google only one option regarding which page should rank for your video. Moreover, making the content only available on your site will ensure that users wishing to watch the video are forced to do so on your domain, making it easier for you to turn that view into a conversion.
Most popular paid hosting solutions allow you to define where your content can be embedded. You will also need to ensure that your video player will not display an “embed” button as an overlay or box beneath the video to keep things secure.

2. **Embed the content with HTML5 and/or Flash, but not an iframe**

Unfortunately, Google is currently not very good at crawling and indexing content in iframes or content delivered with Javascript. This means that if you want videos to be indexed, your best bet is to make sure you are embedding content in an HTML5 player with Flash fallback, or a pure Flash player.

All the paid hosting solutions recommended previously give you this option.

- **Wistia** - Pick the “SEO” embed code type in the “Embed Type > Advanced Options” section of the “SuperEmbeds Builder”
- **Vzaar** - Pick “Plain HTML” in the embed settings page
- **Vimeo Pro** - Pick “old embed code” when you are choosing the embed for the video
- **Brightcove** - Pick “Blog” or “HTML to Embed” Options.

If you are self-hosting - you can use one of the following players.

- **JW player**
- **Video JS**
- **Kaltura HTML5**

Or alternatively **build out your own in HTML5 and Jquery**

3. **Ensure the video file or player is linked to within the HTML of the source and not hidden behind Javascript.**

Google also invariably fails to index videos if the content is delivered dynamically via a JavaScript trigger, rather than within an embedded flash or HTML5 player.

If you do need to hide the video frame and deliver it upon request, then doing this with CSS rather than Javascript will ensure the video file can still be crawled and indexed.

**TECHNICAL IMPLEMENTATION FOR LINK BUILDING**

The technical approach here does not differ significantly from the approach for getting rankings and conversions, but is more an augmentation of that implementation - suitable for content which people are likely to share and embed.
Location and On-Page integration

As with all pieces of link bait, put the content somewhere visible, with good internal linking structure. Ensure the content is embedded in a nice, large frame on the page (640px by 360px is normally good) and isn’t tucked away in the corner, where it will be ignored by a passing visitor.

If you are creating videos specifically for links and social shares, the content will typically have to be the primary, if not sole focus of the page they are on – so building out a page specifically for the link bait is typical best practice.

This page, then, needs to be well connected with the rest of the site, having a good internal linking structure so that any links built to the video provide value to the domain as a whole. Links pass PageRank (Google’s measure of value and authority) and so the better connected pages on your site are to one another, the more internal PageRank they pass. If a page generates lots of inbound links, but is siloed and cut off from the main site - it invariably doesn’t help boost rankings a great deal. “Blog post style” pages are typically appropriate locations for link bait as they can be designed to focus purely on the video in question, but remain well connected to the rest of the site.

Hosting

As with the approach for generating rich snippets and conversions, self-host the content or use a third party solution. It’s imperative in this instance that you don’t put the content on YouTube or Vimeo, as embedded and shared videos on these platforms will then only link back to the YouTube/Vimeo domain, rather than your own.

Embedding

1. **Allow the video to be embedded anywhere**

   To build links through embeds and shares, you need to allow the content to be viewed on sites across the web, which means you’ll need to remove any domain restrictions from the hosting service.

2. **Create a Custom CNAME for your video files**

   If you are self-hosting, you will probably have already done this - but some third party hosting solutions allow you to white label their products and create a CNAME alias - which can be used to make sure all links to a video file in an embed code reference a branded subdomain. This way you can ensure any embedded content links back to you twice; once to reference the video file and once with an attribution link to a page which you can specify.

3. **Include social share buttons next to the video player**

   The template text given when these buttons are pressed need to reference the page on your site with the embedded video in, rather than the video file itself, or an instance of the video on the domain of the hosting provider. If you’re using Brightcove or Wistia, then you can customize your
players to show a plethora of social sharing buttons either as overlays or as icons next to the player. Make sure to include any which seem relevant to your niche and always the big three (Facebook, Twitter and Google+).

If you have a different hosting platform, or are building your own player - then just include social sharing buttons as plugins below or to the side of your video player.

4. **Customize an iframe embed code for users to embed your content**

Because Google is bad at reading iframes, make other sites use an iframe for the embed. This will prevent the videos from being indexed on their sites, but the code will still appear to the engines as a referring link back to you. Whether you’re using a third party provider or hosting yourself, you should also add an additional attribution link at the end, outside of the iframe, pointing to any page on your site which you want to build links for. It’s normally most appropriate to target the home page with branded anchor text, but you can pick deeper pages if you like.

**TECHNICAL IMPLEMENTATION FOR BRANDING & NOTORIETY**

If your main goal with video is getting your company and services in front of as wide an audience as possible, or making a video “go viral” - this is the approach you should be taking.

**Hosting**

Host the content with YouTube and Vimeo.

Additionally upload it to YouTube, Vimeo, and Daily Motion and submit to any other video sharing sites you can find. The goal here is to get the content in front of as many eyes as possible - foregoing the SEO benefits to your own site- so duplicate content should not be seen as an issue. The list below provides an initial list of potential options for placement.

**Sites to Submit Video to:**

- MetaCafe
- BlipTV
- Veoh
- Break
- Daily Motion
- SevellLoad
- PhotoBucket
- Zoopy.com
- Video Jug
- WonderHowTo

**Note** – building a presence on the above communities can also get you referring links, so ensure you take advantage of those opportunities where possible.
When uploading a new instance of your video i.e. on Vimeo in addition to YouTube, ensure you are optimizing for a slightly different keyword variation every time; this will allow you to target a wider range of terms in the search engines and help prevent you from competing with yourself in the search results.

**Keyword Research**

Use both the [YouTube keyword tool](#) and the [Google Keyword tool](#) both set to “exact match” to find a suitable term to optimise your video for. Measure search volume up against competition to determine which phrases you will and won’t be able to rank for. Ensure the term you end up choosing is not a keyword you’re currently ranking for with your main site, otherwise you run the risk of having your video on YouTube.com compete with your main site for placements in the search engine results page.

**Location, Embedding and On-Page**

Embed the YouTube version of the video on your site – ideally within a blog post framework or somewhere that will ultimately drive views and clicks. Any views on your site will raise the total number of views for the video on YouTube.com and will help to improve the overall ranking on YouTube.com.

Add supporting content to your site that you can drive traffic to from YouTube (This is perhaps a supporting blog post, additional video or selection of interviews)

**Custom Playlists**

If you are planning to launch a series of videos, consider embedding this content in a custom YouTube Playlist. This can be done by building and embedding a playlist on YouTube or through the [YouTube API](#). If you use the API method, it’s possible to ensure that the playlist is only available for viewing on your own domain, which can drive social shares and links as well as traffic to your domain rather than YouTube.

Use the tool below to help build out a custom YouTube Playlist:

[Custom Playlist Tool - Distilled](#)

**Note:** You must be logged into Google to view this document and please make a copy if you wish to edit.

If you don’t have much budget for video, but are still interested to drive traffic and shares to your site, a custom playlist featuring other’s videos on YouTube can be a fantastic way to do this. Themes such as “best Cat videos” or “Top 100 video editing tips”.

**Optimise Your YouTube and Vimeo Channels**

1. **Target branded Keywords**

   Normally, you want your YouTube channel to rank in both Google and YouTube search for your brand name, so naming your channel after your brand, e.g. “My Company” is generally the best option. If you are unable to secure this username, then picking a partially descriptive branded term is a good alternative e.g. “My Company – Specifically Vertical” or like in Distilled’s case, “DistilledSEO”.


2. **Consider becoming a YouTube Partner**

If you are interested in making some money from your YouTube Channel, then joining the [YouTube partner program](https://www.youtube.com/partner) will allow you to monetise your videos by running pre-roll ads and pop-ups over your video. The marketing value of this is in greater customisation of your channel – which allows for selling merchandise through a store tab on your channel and uploading custom channel backgrounds which can drive traffic back to your site through links. The downside to becoming a partner is having to host ads within your videos and in the preroll, which can deter users from watching content through to the end.

3. **Link to your domain**

Ensure you add a link from your YouTube channel back to your domain. While this is a `rel="nofollow"` link, so won’t pass PageRank, it may drive some traffic.

These same principles of channel optimization generally apply to the profiles on Vimeo:

| a) Secure your URL - This should look like “http://www.vimeo.com/mycompany” |
| b) Name your profile after your brand name |
| c) Ensure you include a unique and relevant description of your company in the account description, with keywords included. |
| d) Add links to your YouTube Channel and main domains within the “on the web” section. |
| e) If you have a paid Vimeo Pro account - then enable the “community pass”, which allows users to find your content when browsing videos on the main Vimeo site. |

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**Optimise Your YouTube Videos**

1. **Upload Each YouTube video with keywords in the file name**

From [research we have done at Distilled](https://www.distilled.com/), this appears to be a ranking factor. My-company-keyword-keyword.mov is a much better file name than sequence-1.mov.

2. **Optimise your thumbnail for click-through-rate**

After a video has been uploaded and processed, YouTube gives you the option of three different thumbnail images to represent your video in the Google and YouTube results pages. Pick the option which looks most attractive and appealing to you.

If you’re not keen on any of the options that Google offers up, a way to give yourself more options is to export 5 or 6 versions of your video, each a few seconds longer or shorter (add/remove from the beginning or end) then upload them all simultaneously. You’ll get 3 slightly different thumbnail options for each upload. Choose the one you like and then delete the duplicate files from your channel.
3. **Pick a Title for Your Video**

Your title should be appealing, spark interest and target appropriate terms discovered through your keyword research. However, it should also be honest. A surefire way to do poorly on YouTube is to fail to deliver on audience expectation by overestimating the value of your content in the title – it’s essentially the same as rick-rolling.

4. **Link back to your site in your description**

Ensure your description on YouTube is relevant and keyword focused, but most importantly include a naked URL link (e.g. http://distilled.net) back to your site somewhere within the first three lines of text. This link won’t pass PageRank or SEO value to your site due to the addition of the rel=nofollow tag, but it will allow customers to travel directly to your site from the video, and will therefore hopefully generate some referring traffic.

5. **Upload a Closed Caption file**

Probably the most important thing you should do to optimise your YouTube videos is submit a closed caption (transcript) file. Google and YouTube treat these closed captions essentially like page copy for a video, allowing your content to rank for phrases spoken within your video itself. If you work in multiple markets across different languages, you can upload several closed caption files, each for a different language and target demographic.

A good tool for quickly transcribing your YouTube videos is Caption Tube, but if you want to transcribe a number of videos at scale, www.speechpad.com offer a well-priced human transcription service.

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**TECHNICAL IMPLEMENTATION FOR ACHIEVING ALL OF THE ABOVE**

It’s very rare to be in a situation where you have a video that will not only aid conversions, but will also attract links and do well virally. You will need to be in the unique position of having something that sells your service, demonstrates creative and aesthetic excellence while providing a hook that will generate embeds and links.

This is one of the only examples found that hits the mark on this front, providing both branding, advertisement, product description and a hook with creative humour that can be used to drive links.

**Dollar Shave Club**

This video cost Dollar Shave Club around $4,500 and was filmed in a single day, shooting at their warehouse and performed by their employees. If you can build something of this integrated quality, then you have basically won the internet. While it’s awesome to get a video like this, it takes exceptional creativity and investment. For most companies, it’s normally better and less risky to aim to hit different channels with different videos, rather than to put all your eggs in one basket. Moreover, you will likely find that the spread of focus across different goals with a single piece of content dilutes the ability of the content to be really successful with one of the goals.
**Location and On-page elements**

You need to place the content on an easily accessible page, targeting a term suitable for getting a rich snippet, keeping the video front and center of that page. Make sure the page is well linked up internally, so you can spread the link equity you’re going to get.

**Hosting and Embedding**

1. **The first thing you should worry about is getting the rich snippet**

   If your video is in the hands of others before you’ve had a chance to get that ranking and claim ownership, you risk others being able to get results for your content. Host a secure version on your site, embedding in Flash or HTML5 and following the aforementioned suggestions for getting rankings and conversions until you have got your nice rich snippet results.

2. **Once you have the snippet, allow others to embed the content**

   Put a custom iframe embed code next to the video on the page, with an additional attribution link outside the iframe code.

3. **Include social share buttons next to the video**

   These should reference the page with the video, rather than the video file on your domain or a third party domain.

4. **Outreach for links**

   Follow a process for outreach and promotion (suggestions for this detailed later in the guide.)

5. **Aim for views and impressions**

   When the link building outreach dries up, a month or two later; submit the content to YouTube, Vimeo and any other video sharing sites, but optimise everything for different keyword variations - so you don’t risk outranking yourself with your own video on the YouTube or Vimeo domains. Follow the process for YouTube outreach detailed later in the guide.

6. **Clean up the links**

   A few months later - find anyone who has embedded your content from your “branding campaign” but are linking back to YouTube or Vimeo as a consequence, and outreach to them with an (iframe) embed code for the secure version on your site. Explain this code is the higher quality version and that you would be extremely grateful if they would switch it over so you can get the referring link attribution. Most people are happy to do this, as after all, they’ve already linked to your content.
N.B. - the reason you don’t normally take this two pronged “self-hosted and YouTube” approach for video link building is that by putting the content on YouTube/Vimeo, you will inevitably encourage future links and social shares to point to these domains, rather than yours. This may be not be a problem and it can be worth sacrificing potential link equity for greater exposure, but if you’re looking to build links and shares over an extended period with evergreen content, it’s normally not appropriate.
In order to really succeed, video needs to be of exceptional quality. As with text, imagery or other creative content - mediocre content can yield mediocre returns, but to truly succeed with video, the quality must be exceptional, whether your aim is increased search traffic, better brand awareness or greater links back to your site.

However, high quality content does not necessarily go hand-in-hand with high production value. Clearly, only organisations with huge marketing budgets can consider Hollywood level production and animation, but that doesn’t mean small budget video can’t be extremely successful. The following section is a blueprint for the creative production process, whether you’re planning to hire in freelancers or build out the content in-house, with budgets in the hundreds or hundreds of thousands.

**DEFINING A SUBJECT AND THEME**

While video is an attention grabbing and emotionally engaging form, commercial video is typically not an effective form to communicate nuanced literary complexity or detailed technical concepts.

Unless you plan to record a live performance, event or happening, you’ll need to define the core message of your video - identifying what it’s about and why users will want to engage with it. We call this the subject and the theme.

**Subject** = the overall topic and area of interest. **Theme** = the message you wish to impart about that topic or area of interest. This may be as simple as something like:

- **Subject**: Video Marketing
  **Theme**: How to create an iframe embed code for a video

Or

- **Subject**: My Company’s product
  **Theme**: Why this product is better than competing offerings.

The importance of defining these elements before beginning production is in ensures you drive the creative process towards serving the business aims you defined during the creative brainstorming and content gap analysis.

Setting a theme gives the content a clear purpose which creative decisions can be taken against, in order to maintain a coherent and targeted dramaturgy.
By this, we mean that most good videos appear to be constructed with a clear purpose in mind, instantly clear to an audience, offering a compelling and rich reason why people should stick out the content to the end. Often video content fails when there is disintegration between the style of the content and the business objectives, causing a lack of clear purpose for the video.

**DETERMINING LEVEL OF PRODUCTION QUALITY REQUIRED**

The key to determining the level of production required in various aspects of the process should derive from the content ideas themselves. Why is anyone going to care about this content? Does the core theme relate to anything specifically aesthetic or visual? If you’re doing tutorial/informational content - then the quality can afford to be much less polished than anything with a sales focus.

Consider the typical use-case of someone watching your video. What brought them there? If it’s to learn something or get an idea, providing the advice is good, the production doesn’t need to do more than simply give away that information. However, if you’re creating an ad for your business and trying to convey professionalism and quality, extremely well designed and produced visuals will be imperative.

Correspondingly, good quality production is not a substitute for high quality content. If you spend reams of budget on beautiful effects, but have an ultimately weak idea behind them – the video will not be successful.

The table below indicates when the quality of the production matters, and therefore – where and how you should be distributing the budget within the production and editing process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style</th>
<th>Visuals</th>
<th>Audio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promotional/Ad</td>
<td>Highest quality production, a variety of shots and angles</td>
<td>Professionally recorded voice over and custom professional music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetic imagery/design focussed content</td>
<td>Highest possible production value, with heavy editing</td>
<td>Composed in conjunction with the visuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humorous/Creative</td>
<td>Appropriate for the angle – can be very basic or extremely complicated</td>
<td>Appropriate for the angle – can be highly musical or without any audio at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informational Tutorial</td>
<td>Clear, appropriately placed, without too much detail or busyness in the image.</td>
<td>Clear, simply vocal recording, with any music kept very low in the mix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation/Interview</td>
<td>Simple, well-lit and against a clean background with one to three camera angles</td>
<td>Professional quality vocal recording with no music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product Video</td>
<td>Best when simple, clear and not overly produced. One wide angle shot and one close up on the product</td>
<td>Audio must be clear and easy to comprehend, without overbearing music</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The next stage is to work out what style of shots and imagery your video will contain, based on the best way of presenting the theme you defined at the start of the pre-production process. There are essentially 4 types of footage that can comprise a video:

- Performed content
- Live event recording
- Graphical Animation
- Screen recording

Performed content is content which features a performance deliberately targeted at the camera – for a film audience. This could be an acted piece, a musical performance, an interview, a live demonstration or even something as subversive and creative as the example below – a pseudo performance by non-performers.

“Working recently with Director Philip Bloom on the Adidas Team GB Don’t Stop Me Now viral, it was obvious how vital it is to tailor direction to non-actors. These particular athletes were mainly used to camera interviews and performing their chosen disciplines in front of tens of thousands but miming to Queen was something a little bit different!

It was important to put them at ease, and often telling them/showing them that similar people had done things just as silly as they were being asked to do was an excellent tactic. The use of wigs, costumes, masks and outrageous sunglasses not only helped the aesthetic, but helped relax the talent and realise the aim of the ‘hair-down’ fun video. A perhaps obvious but important factor was also to limit the number of people behind the camera also produced more at ease performances, along with limiting the number of takes and having everything set for the arrival of the talent.”

Kiel Devalera – Freelance Director
Live Event Recording

This refers to an instance where a camera captures an event/happening where footage capture is not the primary purpose – this could be a music concert, a theatrical performance, wildlife footage or something like Distilled’s conference videos.

- The Odd-bins Christmas Oddbin - Oddbins
- Distilled Conference Videos - Distilled

Graphical Animation

This could be Pixar level creations, simple lower thirds laid over individuals being interviewed, or branded stings often placed at the beginning of videos to determine creative ownership of the content.

- Inspiration Day - Kotex

Screen Recording

Screen recording is typically something like screencasts – demonstrations of how to use a specific software or tool- however, it can also comprise recorded video games or a captured powerpoint/keynote presentation for example.

- SEO for Facebook Pages - Distilled

Each of these 4 elements can be done either on a shoe-string or with enormous budgets. Once you’ve worked out the kind of shots you will need, you can work towards effective storyboarding, sourcing the appropriate talent and working out the assets you need in order to produce your content.
Depending on the style of your content, you may want to start with a visual storyboard, or a script. Typically, narrative or informational content is best approached “script-first”, while pieces conceived with aesthetic appeal are often better drawn out before the text is added.

The following programs and tools are fantastic resources for storyboarding, scripting and videos

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scrivener</strong></td>
<td>Scrivener is a superb content generation and writing tool which allows you to build out storyboards, scripts and moodboards – mixing images, speech and stage directions together to allow you to build out your ideas episodically.</td>
<td>$40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Final Draft</strong></td>
<td>Final Draft is industry standard screenwriting and scriptwriting tool. It’s particularly good for anyone who will be delivering scripts to professional actors and directors, as it allows you to seamlessly format your script into a recognised, standard format.</td>
<td>$249.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adobe Story</strong></td>
<td>Adobe Story is a new collaborative script development tool. It has both a web and desktop version, which allows you to collaborate with other writers and store your creations in the cloud for easy access.</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mind Node &amp; Freemind</strong></td>
<td>Mind Node and Freemind are brainstorming/mind-mapping tools which can be great for creating a dump of ideas then finding ways to string them all together.</td>
<td>Mindnode - $9.99 (Mac only) Freemind - Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tumblr/Pinterest</strong></td>
<td>Building shared Tumblr and Pinterest boards is a quick and easy way to collaboratively build out mood-boards or visual idea boards for aesthetic inspiration.</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Prices correct August 2012
Writing/storyboarding is typically a very personal process – with each writer typically having tips and tricks that help them work effectively. However, should you be stuck for inspiration, or are struggling with too many ideas - below is a blueprint of the process we use for scripting out videos at Distilled.

1. **Make note of your subject and theme** – Ensure you have defined these elements as per the instructions at the start of this section. The subject should be a phrase i.e. “content for link building”, the theme should be a short sentence i.e. “link worthy content can be created at low cost”.

2. **Spend 15 minutes just writing and drawing anything** - Clear your mind & writing palate of all the thoughts clogging up your mind space, so you can start cleansed and fresh. Throw this bit of paper/document away.

3. **Laundry List** – Sketch and bullet point every idea, thought, point, concern – be it visual, textual or otherwise. Censor nothing and just get all the ideas out there.

4. **Order the Laundry list** - Take all the points and arrange them into a flow, which starts by exposing the subject and ends with the disclosure of the theme.

5. **Remove all items which disrupt the flow** - Be ruthless. Archive anything which feels like it doesn’t fit – and save it for another day. Video is inherently a difficult medium to communicate nuances and specifics, so it’s typically best to keep a linear narrative.

6. **Flesh out the points** – Expand each point in your list with further text, directions, imagery or notes. Don’t worry about style, grammar or tone.

7. **Remove all items which disrupt the flow** - Again, be ruthless. It’s easy to try and fit too much content into one video, so drive towards simplicity and a clear central idea.

8. **Connect the points** - add in new ideas/sections required to ensure the current points flow effectively.

9. **Test subject and theme** - Do the elements and the structure do a good job of exploring your subject and effectively exposing your theme? It can be worth getting feedback from someone else at this stage.

10. **Set tone and style** - stylistically adjust the content so it fits the type of video you are creating, ensuring you maintain a cohesive dramaturgy.

11. **Edit, edit, edit** - Fix all the linguistic, grammatical issues, the tenuous conclusions and (again) trim out anything, which seems superfluous or uninteresting any poor flow and grammatical problems.

12. **Get Feedback on the script** - Can the audience pick out the subject and theme correctly without prompting? Does the video elicit an emotional response and call to action?

13. **Read through the content with performers** - if you’re recording a voice over, structuring an interview or having an actor perform lines for the camera, then you need to get the content on its feet - to test the sounds and the flow of speech when vocalised. Ensure the performers are happy with the words and that it sounds appropriate in their voice.

14. **Edit, edit, edit** – Edit based on feedback from peers, test audience members and the performers involved. You can go on forever with this... but instead set yourself a time limit and stop editing as soon as you feel reasonably happy with the content.

15. **Ship** - Once it feels ready, send the script to all relevant parties and prepare to film/record the content. You should be willing to deviate from the script slightly during the production process, should performers find better ways of delivering lines – or certain sections become logistically impossible to create. However, always go back to your subject and theme – measuring any potential changes against this – does the content deliver the core message you have in mind? Will the video provide value to your target audience?
Another thing to consider when building out your script, is integrating keywords into the text. You should have already picked out the target keywords for your content, especially if you are working towards the ranking and rich snippets hosting model, or are building out content for YouTube. As will be explained in Chapter 5, video transcripts can be used as “body copy” both on your page and on YouTube, meaning including the presence of keywords within the script overall can increase a video or page’s ability to rank. While it’s not advisable to artificially stuff keywords into the script, it is worth considering including relevant ones where possible and appropriate.

**BUILDING AN ASSET LIST**

It can sometimes be helpful, especially for any projects at scale featuring a number of videos, to create something called an “Asset List” off the back of your script. This is essentially a check list of production elements that you need in order to build out your content – related to the 4 different types of footage mentioned previously (animation/performed content/recorded events/screen recording). Your asset list may look something like:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asset</th>
<th>Format</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview with Will Critchlow</td>
<td>Performed footage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custom Lower third</td>
<td>Animation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequence of inputting data on a website</td>
<td>Screencast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will Critchlow Performing</td>
<td>Event Footage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branded Sting</td>
<td>Animation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This list can then be built out on a granular level – explaining the items needed in order to produce each piece of footage or “asset”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asset</th>
<th>Format</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview with Will Critchlow</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>⭐ Script for Will</td>
<td>Performed Footage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>⭐ Branded Background</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>⭐ Lapel Microphone</td>
<td>Animation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custom Lower third</td>
<td>Sequence of inputting data on a website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>⭐ Logos in Vector forma</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequence of inputting data on a website</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>⭐ Voice over recording</td>
<td>Animation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>⭐ Login information for website</td>
<td>Screen cast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will Critchlow Performing</td>
<td>Event Footage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branded Sting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>⭐ Design Assets in vector format</td>
<td>Animation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OUTSOURCING**

**Hiring Actors/Performers**

If you’re making content heavily focused on performed elements, it’s possible that you’ll need to employ some actors for your creation. As the vast majority of actors work as freelancers – it’s usually remarkably easy to hire excellent people at short notice, without it costing you too much (or even anything at all in some instances). This is especially true if you live in a big theatre/film industry hub such as London, New York or Los Angeles.

If you don’t have a specific actor in mind for the content you are creating, normally the best way to get a selection of decent applicants is by putting an advert up on a web casting directory.

In the UK, You can advertise on Equity’s website for free or similarly Casting Call Pro allow you to place an advert in seconds. Spotlight is probably the best resource, as a directory of almost all professional actors in the UK; however it does requires you to pay a modest subscription fee for their service.

For film makers in the US, Breakdown Express is a good casting directory and Casting Call Pro US offers the same features as the UK version.
These resources are fantastic if you’re looking to receive applications from interested actors who meet your casting specifications. If, however, in your creative brainstorming you have come up with a wish-list of specific actors who you’d love to get for your video – it’s definitely possible for you to go out and get them. Be ambitious and think big with your choice of actors. Even the most well-known of actors spend a considerable amount of the year out of work and if you’re making something interesting which wouldn’t take up too much of their time – little projects can be a welcome break.

Either by going through Spotlight/Breakdown Express, or just by doing a bit of a clever Googling, it’s easy to find out who an actor’s agent is and to drop them a phone-call. I believe it’s always best to get in touch with an actor through their agent where possible, as requests sent through a professional avenue will always carry an air of legitimacy unsolicited requests often lack.

Similarly, sports personalities, celebrities and other public figures often have agents or PR agencies responsible for organising their promotional and corporate advertising work. Fees vary enormously dependent on who you’re after, but if you approach agents honestly and professionally – it’s possible to get some great talent without it costing the earth. Additionally, another way to work with specific public figures is to see if you can partner up with charitable organisations that those celebrities are ambassadors for. If you can find a way to work for mutual benefit with a specific charity – offering them value such as quality promotion or sponsorship, then doors can be opened up for partnerships with other people/organisations that work with the charity – including potentially your desired public figure.

Sourcing Filming & Editing (production) Talent

There are many extremely talented film and video professionals out in the world, many who work freelance and can be hired for a modest fee. If you don’t have the creative expertise for video creation in house, or the time to learn - then outsourcing the creative process can be an excellent way to build out a quality content library with ease.

Within the UK, the following sites are excellent places to find freelancers:

- Mandy
- Shooting People
- Searchlight
- Skill Set
- Production Base
- Film and TV Pro

Within the US, the following sites are excellent places to find freelancers:

- Mandy
- Production Hub
- Skill Set
- Film and TV Pro
In addition to sourcing freelance labour, using student talent to build out your content can yield fantastic results. Many film and media students are extremely talented, but lack exposure and experience. As a business, if you’re able to offer the opportunity to showcase work in a professional environment, then many students can be willing to offer their services for minimal cost.

Often, universities will have staff dedicated to managing employment opportunities for students and can assist in promoting your job opportunity if you contact them directly. Outside of this, heads of departments are usually the best people to contact if you’re looking to get students involved in your productions.

Another way to locate potential talent for your production is to find people on Twitter with interests in film production. A quick and scalable way to do this is through followerwonk, which allows you to search Twitter profiles for key phrases and areas of interest.

**TIPS FOR SETTING UP YOUR RECORDING EQUIPMENT**

**Camera**

Always ensure you film in Full HD resolution (1920x1080) and invariably with a frame rate of 25p or 30p. The form and codec you choose to film is something of a moot point for online media, which will eventually be compressed and likely encoded with an h.264 MPEG-4 codec for online delivery.

If you want to buy a camera for short pieces, but have somewhat restricted budget, a good DSLR with a quality wide angle lens is usually your best bet, provident you don’t require varied depth of field.

**Lighting**

The most important thing in producing good quality footage, outside of filming with a quality camera, is ensuring you set up appropriate lighting for indoor environments. Studios need to be extremely well lit, so if you’re planning to build out a series of interviews or product videos within a single location – spending some money on a set of quality lights can be the difference between great content and poor content.

This guide from lighting manufacturer Lowel gives you a great introduction to basic studio lighting concepts and should help you work out the kinds of lights you will need to source for your own studio set-up.

If you have no access to or budget for professional lights, then at least ensure you film in a well-lit space, with the main source light facing the subject of focus. This means you should really avoid filming in front of windows where possible.

For further information on setting up a simple studio on a budget, check out this guide from our friends over at Vzaar.
When filming, always keep the ISO as low as possible before the image becomes too dark to work with. Keeping a lower ISO maintains a clearer image, which allows for better correction in post-production. So where possible, change the lighting and then the aperture before pushing up the ISO.

### Microphone

Potentially more critical than using a great camera, is using a quality microphone and minimising extraneous background noise. Poor quality footage can still be a vessel for otherwise excellent content, but poor quality audio is more or less intolerable; meaning that while great visuals are valuable and useful in video, great audio recordings are more or less essential. Consider using lavalier microphones for interviews and vocal recordings where possible and investing in a reasonable quality camera mic, such as the suggestions below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Microphone</th>
<th>Price*</th>
<th>Connection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rode VideoMic – Camera Mounted Shotgun microphone</td>
<td>$149</td>
<td>Minijack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sennheiser ME66.K6</td>
<td>$522</td>
<td>XLR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you are struggling to find a space to record sound without obtrusive background noise, consider that it’s quite easy to remove extremely high pitched or extremely low pitched noises from the audio mix in post-production; but very hard to get rid of background noise if it’s present at the same pitch as the key focus of the recording.

### Filming with Multiple Cameras

If you’re planning to film a single event with multiple cameras, such as in instances of a conference recording or interview situation – ensure each camera is capturing a distinctly different frame and angle. Being able to jump between images can really help to keep a video dynamic and inject some energy to help the viewer absorb the content. However, to jump successfully between different angles, there needs to be a distinct difference in framing. If the viewer is positioned similarly in each composition, it gives each cut and camera switch a jarring effect which can be both disorientating and alienating for the viewer.

*Prices correct August 2012*
**Performance Tips**

**Speak Slowly.** When recording, always talk slightly slower than you would in everyday conversation, as the nuances of expression are inevitably lost through the cables of a microphone. As a rule of thumb, think about speaking at the speed where it just starts to feel uncomfortably slow. In most cases, when you listen back to your recording, you’ll be surprised that it doesn’t sound as slow as you thought.

**Mark each section in and out.** Clapperboards are traditionally used to mark footage in and out, in order to make it easy for an editor to distinguish the start of a new take and sync time codes across cameras. In lieu of a suitable device to do this, it’s always worth shouting “Take…” in a clear loud at the start of every recording, to make life easier when logging and capturing footage for editing.

**Focus the gaze of the performers.** In “acted” fictional content, such as most TV and Film – the “fourth wall” is typically maintained in accordance with theatrical naturalism. This means that the actors maintain the pretense of ignorance about the existence of cameras in their midst. Under this model, performers cannot at any point look directly into the lens of the camera, instead always maintaining focus “off-screen”. If you are keen to film a close up of an actors face, or have it appear like they are looking at where the camera is, instead of getting them to look in the camera, have them look just off to the side – normally the built-in camera microphone is a good focal point. The one exception to this is if you are creating a “POV” shot, where the camera is essentially replicating the perspective of another character. In these instances, actors can look into the lens.

For most non-fiction content – such as tutorials, product videos or presentations; performers should look directly into the lens and perform to the imagined audience who will watch the content online in the future.

For interviews, however, it normally works best for delivery to be directed towards the (real or imagined) interviewer, who should be placed right next to the camera. If it’s important to have both the interviewee and interviewer present within the video itself, then best practice is to have 3 camera angles – one capturing the two persons together, one capturing the view of the interviewee over the interviewers shoulder and one capturing the interviewer over the the interviewees shoulder. The two participants should then direct their focus at one another.

**Position Performers Appropriately within the Frame.** As with still photography, consider the rule of thirds when defining the position and framing of your image. Always avoid having your performers positioned directly in the centre of the frame, as this will typically result in an uninteresting overall image.

If you’re having performers present to the camera in a studio setting, take some time to consider whether they should be presenting seated, standing or somewhere in between. Standing presentations typically carry the air of formality and work well if you require movement, dynamism and performers to interact with a slide deck or whiteboard; while seated presentations invariably feel more relaxed, informal and spontaneous -suitable for conversations between numerous parties, such as a roundtable discussion. Promotional talks and one-sided interviews are best delivered on something like a barstool, which serves as a great halfway house between the two.
The barrier to entry for professional level video editing has been significantly lowered over the past few years, with quality software becoming cheaper and personal computers becoming powerful enough to cope with the intense processing required.

The following programs are all superb, professional level pieces of software – suitable for editing anything up to and including a feature length film.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final Cut Pro X</td>
<td>Mac OS</td>
<td>$299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adobe Premiere Pro CS6</td>
<td>Mac OS &amp; Windows</td>
<td>$569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sony Vegas Pro 11 9</td>
<td>Windows</td>
<td>$539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avid Media Composer</td>
<td>Mac OS &amp; Windows</td>
<td>$2,499</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For those with more limited budgets, the following entry level programs are great for simple video editing processes – such as stringing together sequences and trimming down captured footage. The main process these programs can’t handle is compositing (rendering images on top of each other) and Multicam editing (Quickly switching between multiple camera angles of the same recording).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>iMovie</td>
<td>Mac OS</td>
<td>Free with Mac OS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adobe Premiere Elements 10</td>
<td>Mac OS &amp; Windows</td>
<td>$49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additionally, if you are creating content on YouTube, the YouTube Editor allows you to make simple and quick edits to your video – such as transitions and cuts – once your video is uploaded and compressed.
SCREENCASTING

For screen recording and screencasting, use one of the following programs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Camtasia</td>
<td>Mac OS and Windows</td>
<td>Mac - $99, PC - $299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screenflow</td>
<td>Mac OS</td>
<td>$99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screencast O Matic</td>
<td>Web</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you are including screencasts in your video – ensure you don’t expand your footage past the native recording resolution in the editing process, as this will make the images appear rough and pixelated. Also make sure you add zooming effects and annotations to make the footage seem more polished and professional.

Length

There is no optimum length for videos, but as a rule, content should be kept as short as possible, but no shorter. No matter the main goal of your videos, increased user engagement will be a positive factor you wish to cultivate and so punchy, fast moving videos will tend to be the ideal to aim for.

Also bear in mind that YouTube devalue content with poor user engagement metrics, meaning for this avenue especially, it’s imperative that no superfluous material or kruit is kept within your videos, as that could cause audiences to click away and move on.

SCALING CONTENT CREATION

Work Out Your Scalable Assets

Case Study - Distilled Pro-tip Videos

The playlist above was entirely built out and created in a single day, with no budget, studio, crew or resources to work with. Available was simply an HD camcorder, a £50 microphone and a short period of time from each member of staff at Distilled.

While the content isn’t ground breaking or exceptional, it formed the basis of a plethora of content for our YouTube channel and create talking points for debate and discussion with our fan-base and the wider SEO community. The key to pushing out this quantity of content within a short period is in working out what you can scale.
What we had at our disposal were a lot of smart people, with lots of valuable ideas that they were willing to briefly share on camera. The videos above are somewhat incidental to the real value – which is simple, digestible, actionable tips from all the staff at Distilled; all of which you could get, say, if you spent an evening at a bar with all of them.

You may have similar valuable expertise in-house, with people willing to share their knowledge. If you build or sell physical items, then perhaps you have an abundance of product which people would love to see showcased. If you sell software, could you easily create lots of tutorials which would be valuable to your customer base?

Create a Branded Sting and Custom Lower Third

A simple way to brand your videos is to create a custom video intro or “sting” which you can then use to top and tail all your creations with your brand imagery. The value of these is in tagging “brand-agnostic” content with your company's label, to stamp a level of ownership on the content and advertise your product/service in the process. Once you have created a sting once, topping or tailing new videos with the branding is a very simple and pain free process, which can be done with the most basic of editing programs.

Additionally, if you build out a lower third template in AfterEffects or Motion – it’s a simple task to change the logos or text overlaid and build out custom graphics for each of your videos with ease.

Use Stock Footage to Expand the Style of Shots

Stock footage also isn't that expensive and is a great way of building a variety of different “difficult to source” shots into a video. If you’re doing advertorial content with little time and a small budget, stock footage can be a great way to showcase professional production values without the associated effort. Shutterstock has a nice library, although there are other good ones out there too.

Use Static Image Libraries to Create Video.

Static design assets or image libraries can also be repurposed to produce great videos. Both AfterEffects and Motion can work natively with vector based image files, meaning creative pieces like static infographics can be turned into moving sequences with relative ease, allowing you to repurpose work already undertaken for storytelling in a different creative form.

Additionally, if you can break up elements of photos into layers in photoshop, then it’s a simple process to bring that two-dimensional imagery into virtual 3D landscapes in Adobe AfterEffects or Apple Motion. This composited image can then be navigated using a virtual camera angle – turning what was once static imagery into a dynamic moving picture. There are tons of good web tutorials out there explaining how you can make such things work – here are a couple of choice links.

- Creating a Slideshow
- Still Images: 2D to 3D using After Effects or Apple Motion
Duplicating Content for Retargeting

It’s not uncommon for companies to upload duplicate content to their hosting provider but alter the meta-elements when uploading, in order to target a different niche or location with each video. Unique instances of videos then be served on different landing pages, each targeted towards a variant on an industry or location – such as “Brooklyn Insurance” and “Queens Insurance”

Generally speaking, it’s inadvisable to directly duplicate videos across landing pages – as the lack of considered targeting within the content will be fairly transparent and therefore may actually fail to help improve conversions.

However, if this is something you are trying to do, simple changes during the editing process can allow your content to appear “unique” to the search engines and also allow you to bypass YouTube’s duplicate upload prevention. Ensure you do both the following:

- Change the length of each video by a few seconds, adding in additional frames at the top and tail of the video
- Use different background music and voice over recordings for each version.

EXPORT SETTINGS

Once your content has been edited and you’re happy with the product as stands, use the following production templates to work out the appropriate export settings from your editing program.

YouTube:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Codec</td>
<td>h.264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frame Size</td>
<td>1920x1080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Frames</td>
<td>Automatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pixel Aspect</td>
<td>Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bit Rate</td>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio</td>
<td>ACC/MP3 at 256kbps</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Vimeo:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Codec</td>
<td>h.264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frame Size</td>
<td>1280x 720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Frames</td>
<td>Automatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pixel Aspect</td>
<td>Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bit Rate</td>
<td>5000kbps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio</td>
<td>ACC/MP3 at 320kbps</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Self Hosted:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Codec</td>
<td>h.264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frame Size</td>
<td>1280x 720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Frames</td>
<td>Automatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pixel Aspect</td>
<td>Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bit Rate</td>
<td>2014kbps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio</td>
<td>ACC/MP3 at 320kbps</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Once you’ve created, exported and uploaded your videos – there are a number of things you need to do to kick-start your campaign, whatever the overall goal. If you’re aiming for Rich Snippets, conversions or links – and are therefore launching content on your own site - adding metadata to your videos is an imperative part of giving appropriate signals to the search engine crawlers. If you’re pursuing a brand awareness campaign on YouTube, then there are some key tips and tricks you can undertake to give yourself the best chance of achieving a significant number of views and social shares.

**LAUNCHING CONTENT ON YOUR OWN SITE**

**Create an XML Video Sitemap**

Shortly after uploading your videos and putting them on your site, you should submit a video sitemap to Google Webmaster tools. An XML video sitemap essentially offers Google metadata about your video – such as directions to an appropriate thumbnail and the type of player used to embed the content. You should always create a video sitemap if you are embedding videos on your site – but especially if you are trying to improve conversions and traffic through Rich Snippets in the search result pages.

Even for embedded YouTube videos, a video sitemap is well worth creating. Although Google has access to all of the metadata for YouTube videos - a sitemap allows you to provide additional information - such as defining the uploader and specifying a meta description for the content.

Use the tools below to create a video sitemap and for further reference on the topic, Google has an excellent guide which explains all of the possible sitemap sitemaps elements in full.

- Distilled Video Sitemap Generator for Self Hosted Videos
- Distilled Video Sitemap Generator for Vimeo Videos
- Distilled Video Sitemap Generator for YouTube Videos

After you have built your sitemap and submitted it via Google webmaster tools, ensure you upload it as a file on your website, likely at http://mycompany.com/video_sitemap.xml and then reference the sitemap your robots.txt file. This will allow search engine crawlers to find the file and index the elements accordingly.

If you are planning to outreach your video for links and social shares, and are therefore allowing others to embed the content; ensure the sitemap is submitted before you begin any outreach and wait for the video to be indexed before you allow others to embed it.

Assuming you have included the `<video:publication_date>` and `<video:uploader>` information - it will “hopefully” be clear to Google that your version of the video is the canonical and this should help to prevent others being able to rank for your content.
Include the video transcription or a link to it on the page

You can either add the transcription as plain text on the page, as SEOMoz do with Whiteboard Friday Videos or upload a text file containing the transcript in a TTML format such as .srt. When combined with Schema Mark-up, this transcript will allow search engines to index the text and associate it with the video.

Add Schema.org Mark-up to your pages

Schema.org is a microformatting vocabulary that allows webmasters to mark up HTML with additional information recognized by the major search engines. For video, this is particularly valuable, as adding schema to a page helps search engines to read and index videos and accompanying metadata.

The following properties of the VideoObject schema are the ones particularly relevant for commercial video:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>contentUrl</td>
<td>The video file itself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>embedUrl</td>
<td>The src element of an embed tag (the same as player_loc element in the video sitemap vocabulary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>caption</td>
<td>Video Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thumbnail</td>
<td>The thumbnail image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>encodingFormat</td>
<td>.mp4, .flv, .mov etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>duration</td>
<td>Length of the video in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transcript</td>
<td>plain text transcript of the video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>videoFrameSize</td>
<td>Frame size of the embedded version of the video e.g. 640x360</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Add Facebook Open Graph Mark-up to your page

Facebook Open Graph is another mark-up vocabulary, that when connected to a Facebook App, allows 3rd party websites and web apps to connect user activity on-site with user activity on Facebook. Through defining “objects” (piece of content) and “actions” (watch, read, listen etc) Open Graph enables watching your videos to become an integral part of a user’s Facebook activity, by posting the activity on the timeline, news feed and real-time ticker.

Additionally, including this mark-up on your site will allow for further possibilities as new technologies are developed within Facebook.
In the video below, Mat Clayton from Mixcloud offers a more comprehensive explanation of the key concepts and functions:

⭐ Facebook Open Graph Explain - With Mat Clayton

This succinct guide details the open graph Video Meta Tags, explaining how they should be implemented with practical examples.

Once you’ve implemented the mark-up around your video, you’ll need to set up an “App”, which can be done quickly and easily by following this guide.

Include Links and calls to action

Many hosting solutions allow you add clickable links at the end of your videos and you can also overlay links on top of an embedded HTML5 video with Javascript. These links are not crawlable by search engine spiders, so they won’t provide any SEO benefit in terms of improved rankings, but can nonetheless provide clear calls to action for your audience, allowing you to drive traffic to targeted pages off the back of your video.

For the self-hosted video option - I recommend reading through http://bubbles.childnodes.com/ which gives you some usable code.

Outreaching Video

When outreaching video for links – ensure you include a simple iframe embed code (with link) within your email, as well as a link to the original video on your domain, so your targets can view the content before deciding whether or not they want to embed it. The goal should be to make it as easy as possible for people to link to your content.

For further information about outreach and pre-outreach (finding people who care about your idea and will help you promote it prior to launch), check out the following great blog posts:

http://www.distilled.net/linkbait-guide/
http://www.distilled.net/blog/social-media/link-building/finding-outreach-targets-with-competitive-research/
http://www.seomoz.org/blog/outreach-for-linkbuilding-whiteboard-friday
http://www.seomoz.org/blog/linkbuilder-gmail-productivity-setup-and-outreach-examples
http://www.seomoz.org/blog/definitive-guide-to-qualifying-a-link-prospect-video

As well as manually outreaching your content, you can pay for content to be seeded through embedded players on blogs around the web. This won’t provide any SEO value, but can be a great way of getting your content in front of more eyes to increase brand awareness and social shares. Unruly Media is an excellent provider of such a service.
**LAUNCHING CONTENT ON YOUTUBE**

Rankings for video on YouTube.com and Google organic search are essentially determined by the relevancy of the video with regards to the search query in question and the authority of the video - as determined by user engagement, views, inbound links and activity in the likes and comments.

**Get users to watch the video the whole way through**

YouTube uses user engagement as the primary metric to determine the quality of a video, with full views being counted as a positive engagement and users bouncing away from the video or closing the page before playback is completed being treated as a negative engagement. If you can encourage users to watch the video the full way through immediately after launch, this will set your video up with some positive metrics to build off.

**Link to the video from your site and share the content socially**

Linking to your video will also help boost the overall rankings, so find an excuse to embed or link to the content in a blog post. Sharing the new upload through all your social media channels will also kick-start the seeding of the video and may help with rankings.

**DEVELOPING AN AUTHORITATIVE YOUTUBE CHANNEL**

In order for new content to continually rank well on YouTube, you need to have an authoritative channel with lots of subscribers where content is frequently viewed and socially shared. The following tips will help you achieve this.

**Take a “Lean and Mean” approach to your channel**

Ensure all the content you release gets good impressions and performs well. It’s much better to have 20 videos, all with a large number of views, shares and comments rather than 40 videos where only 20 are contributing the lion’s share of activity. While it may not make a huge difference from a user perspective – diluting your overall views and shares across a wider number of videos will send negative algorithmic signals about the quality of your content, with no significant value being provided by the videos that aren’t performing.

**Use paid advertising to boost the number of views**

Views are cheap to buy on YouTube. Videos with a large number views appear more authoritative to users browsing YouTube and Google – improving organic click through rate and subsequent natural views. Views you purchase through in-stream advertising on YouTube count in the overall “view ticker” on your video and channel – meaning it’s easy to spoof authority for relatively low cost.

Moreover, views can often convert into subscribers, meaning you have nothing to lose in paying for views and getting the content in front of a greater number of eyes.
You may have content on your channel suitable for paid advertising, but if not – make sure you build out some quality brand ads for this purpose. Ads on YouTube typically perform best when they’re between 15 and 30 seconds long – as 30 seconds is the maximum amount of time a pre-roll ad can play for before users can close the ad in favour of the video they originally intended to watch. At the very least, ensure content you use for advertising mentions the brand name and gets the core of the out there within 30 seconds.

Include a link to your subscription page and other videos in the annotations

The YouTube annotations infrastructure allows you to include links to other pages on youtube.com. This can be utilized to drive viewers to your channel page e.g. http://www.youtube.com/distilledseo and encourage them to subscribe by including text such as “subscribe to our channel!” in the annotation. Additionally, if you have related videos or a playlist – you can include these links and hopefully drive users to engage with more of your content.

**MAKING SOMETHING “GO VIRAL”**

Generally speaking, videos typically go viral as a consequence of a wider, community driven context amplifying the spread and awareness. Virality can be both good and bad for a company, as shown with this example where a Fedex driver threw a monitor over a fence.

Fedex Guy Throwing My Monitor

It’s not uncommon for companies and marketers to attempt to build “viral videos” for a company, thinking of viral as an adjective, rather than a verb.

In these instances, it’s normally the case that an exec wants to see tangible return from videos - rather than necessarily virality per-say. In these instances, its worth explaining the possible returns from video and explaining the correct form of measurement for the goal in question - as detailed in Chapter 7 of this guide.

However, if you do want to make something “go viral”, following the process below will give you the best chance.

1. **Build a story into your content**

   The story should be something that provides additional context for the content, providing an immediate and attention worthy headline – something that explains why an audience should care.
2. **Outreach like crazy with the story**

Contact influencers and see if they can embed the video or link to the story. Contact both bloggers and prominent social media influencers, considering in each instance why the story would be interesting to them and their audience. Promotion from prominent influencers is almost always a factor in content “going viral”, as explained in this TED talk with Kevin Alloca, YouTube’s Trends Manager

![Kevin Alloca: Why Videos Go Viral](https://example.com/kevin-alloca-ted-talk)

3. **Seed the content**

Promote your content via a video advertising service like Unruly Media. Bear in mind that in order to see returns; you may need to expend a significant amount of money at that stage.

4. **Repeat**

It can take a significant amount of time and energy before content “goes viral” and if the initial angle and story are not strong enough to sustain a period of intense social media activity – then it can be worth going back to the drawing board and thinking of additional stories, angles and PR hooks that can be constructed around the video itself.
Chapter 6

Integrating with Wider Marketing Plan

Online video has the greatest value when it becomes a core element of the overall marketing strategy - working alongside written content, PR stories, user generated material and offline marketing efforts.

Perhaps some of the most successful video marketing campaigns we have seen in recent years, such as the examples below, have all used video as part of a integrated campaign across marketing channels, with the videos supported by strategy in PR, live events, display advertising and on-site content.

- The T-Mobile Dance - T-Mobile
- Roller Water Babies - Evian

TV Ad Campaigns

If your company is working on a TV advertising campaign, consider spending a small amount of budget on some additional online-only video content. This can help to boost the efficacy of that campaign by offering further content for users to share and engage with online. T-Mobile have done an excellent job with this, by including audience testimonials from the aforementioned “T-Mobile Dance” flashmob on their YouTube channel.

Additionally, you should always make sure you upload your TV Ads to your YouTube Channel and Vimeo account. If you don’t, you can be sure that someone else will.

Public Relations

Video News Releases can be a fantastic way of building strong media links back to your site, but they also work well when used to support existing PR campaigns – particularly through expert interviews and “behind the scenes” footage of events or creative campaigns.

Social Media

Twitter

Twitter is a great avenue for promoting video and generating engagement around a campaign, as Twitter enables YouTube and Vimeo videos to be embedded in tweets, allowing users to watch the content directly in their tweet stream. For videos hosted on other platforms, users are required to click away from Twitter in order to watch the content.
One important thing to do is to link your Twitter account to your YouTube channel in the YouTube account settings, as this will then auto-tweet to notify your followers whenever you upload a new video.

**Facebook**

Facebook allows you to upload video directly from your computer, meaning it’s possible to post content on Facebook and make it exclusively accessible there. Additionally, including a link to a YouTube video within a Facebook update will automatically embed the content, allowing users to view the video from within the Facebook page rather than clicking through to YouTube.com.

**Google+**

Like Facebook, Google+ allows you to upload video directly or embed YouTube videos within a post. As Google+ is relatively new, it can be difficult to drive activity there, especially if your brand is not in the tech or marketing niches. However, if your fanbase are active on Google+, a good way to engage with them on the platform is through upload and offering exclusive video content.

**Reddit**

If anyone needs convincing about the power of referrals from Reddit, have a look at this graph of visitors to distilled.net site. That spike in the middle is our 404 page hitting the front page of Reddit for one day, where it sent 102,446 referrals over a 24 hour period.

![Graph of visitors to distilled.net site](image)

The key to successful content on Reddit is the relationship between the post title and the content itself. Simply putting something like “Here is an interesting video” will get you nowhere – the title and content have to have a relationship; one where expectation & curiosity is set by the title, then met or subverted entirely when the reader clicks through to the content. Read this post for a detailed breakdown on Marketing through Reddit.

Providing supporting content related to your video specifically for the Reddit community can be another way to successfully generate buzz and engagement. This may be a “behind the scenes” snippet, humorous outtakes, or if you have celebrity involvement in your creation – getting them to do an AMA (Ask me anything) session. This last approach was recently done very successfully by Old Spice, with the NFL player turned action star Terry Crews.
If you’re undertaking a PPC advertising campaign with your company/client, consider putting some of that budget towards video advertising. TrueView Instream ads on YouTube and the Google Display Network are relatively cheap and with the CPV (cost per view) moder, you are only charged for the view once the user watches past 30 seconds of the video (or watches the ad through to completion if it’s shorter than 30 seconds).

Using Video to create moving and interactive display ads

The Google Display Network supports .gif of flash files as display ads, which offers the opportunity to turn snippets from any of your videos into repeating image sequences that you can place across the web and accompany a wider advertising campaign. These can also be used as companion banners for your video ads on YouTube and to retarget audiences who have watched your videos.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frame Size</th>
<th>File Type</th>
<th>Max File Size</th>
<th>Max Frame Rate</th>
<th>Max Animation length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>300x250</td>
<td>.JPG, .GIF, .SWF with backup .GIF/.JPG</td>
<td>50Kb</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The process of turning snippets of footage into gifs is easily scaled using Adobe Photoshop, as detailed in this step by step guide. For further information on creating Flash based banner ads, have a look the advice and specifications from Google.

YouTube Homepage Advertising

YouTube homepage takeovers are still relatively cheap and allow you to include a combination of large scale display advertising with video, interactive content and imagery all including links back to your site. Check out this page for examples of each of the ad types available on YouTube.
CHAPTER 7  MEASURING SUCCESS

The way in which you measure the success of your videos will vary; dependent on the goals you initially set for the campaign. The table below summarises the appropriate metrics to track for each of the major marketing goals detailed throughout this guide.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Goal</th>
<th>Appropriate Metric</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Brand Awareness                                        | ★ Branded Search Traffic  
|                                                        | ★ Brand Recognition Surveys  
|                                                        | ★ Google Trends (For Large Organisations)  
|                                                        | ★ Social Media Metrics  
|                                                        | ★ Brand Mentions  
|                                                        | ★ Video Views  
| User Engagement                                        | ★ Time on Page  
|                                                        | ★ Community Activity  
|                                                        | ★ Engagement with Video  
| Improved On-site Conversions                           | ★ Conversion Tracking  
|                                                        | ★ Sales  
|                                                        | ★ Time on Page  
|                                                        | ★ Exit Rate  
|                                                        | ★ Bounce Rate  
| Increased Traffic                                     | ★ Search Traffic to the Page from Keywords  
|                                                        | ★ Overall Non-paid Traffic to the Page  
| Links                                                 | ★ Inbound Links  
|                                                        | ★ Embeds  
|                                                        | ★ Social Shares  
|                                                        | ★ Overall Site Rankings  
| Conversions from Paid Placement Campaigns              | ★ Clicks and Click Through Rate  
|                                                        | ★ Engagement  
|                                                        | ★ Conversions  

**BRAND AWARENESS**

Measuring brand awareness is always a somewhat inexact science, but there are plenty of techniques available to help you benchmark your standing and any subsequent improvements.
1. **Branded Search Traffic**

   Look for overall improvements in visits coming from branded terms, particularly any queries that directly relate to the content of the video campaign. Be aware that increased brand awareness isn’t always something that immediately translates into increased visits to your site, (most of the traffic from a branding campaign will go to your YouTube Channel) and a lack of significant improvement in this area doesn’t necessarily mean the campaign hasn’t been successful.

2. **Brand Recognition Surveys**

   These surveys are typically conducted by accredited market research agencies as a way of determining brand recognition and/or perception based on a series of questions put to a targeted sample of potential consumers. These questions often require participants to pick out things such as brand names and logos, or identify what their perception is of the big players in various markets; both with and without prompting e.g. “What can you tell me about the Distilled brand” (prompted) and “Name some online marketing companies” (unprompted). In terms of brand exposure, you target should always be improving levels of unprompted recall of your company’s name.

3. **Google Trends**

   Google Trends and Google Insights for Search provide an overview of search volume for a specific term over time. If your company has a considerable online presence and wide reach; your brand name may appear as a recognised term in Google trends, allowing you to monitor any spikes or increase in searches over the course of your marketing activity. Bear in mind that if you have a brand name with semantic dimensions past the brand identity itself, such as we do at Distilled (Distilled Whisky, Distilled Water etc), then Google trends may prove of little use, as it’s difficult to differentiate brand related search from non-brand related queries.

4. **Social Media Metrics**

   Your social media presence is also a reasonable benchmark of overall awareness; particularly engagement with and affinity for, the brand identity. Make sure you track both the number of followers/subscribers and mentions of the brand - using the following list of excellent social media measurement tools. For video focussed campaigns, pay particular attention to shares of your YouTube Videos and your YouTube Channel subscribers.

   - Tom Anthony Bulk Social Counter
   - Tom Anthony Social Metrics Chrome Extension
   - Social Mention
   - Topsy
   - Crowd Booster
   - Facebook Insights
   - Wildfire
   - Simply Measured
5. **Branded Mentions**

Brand mentions on other sites can easily be tracked using Google Alerts.

6. **Video Views**

This is the main metric you should be looking at to determine the success and reach of your videos, with respect to brand awareness. Simply put, the more people that have seen your videos, the more people will be aware of your brand. Regularly track the view counts on both YouTube and Vimeo to ascertain the spread of your content – including any paid views in the overall calculation. While paid traffic to your YouTube Channel doesn’t represent organic growth of brand notoriety, every view still represents an expansion of overall awareness.

Make sure you set reasonable and achievable goals for the performance of your videos and the amount of views you hope to achieve. It’s very easy to look at some of the most successful video campaigns on YouTube and see millions of views as a tangible target to aim for. These cases are the exception, not the rule and it takes a lot of time, effort, trial and error before you can achieve “virality” in such magnitude. For a high quality corporate video, or piece of informational content created by unknown brand, 1000 organic views is normally a good result.

**USER ENGAGEMENT**

User engagement is a somewhat elusive concept and as a consequence, can be difficult to track with any degree of certainty. Nonetheless, but there are several key indicators of success which you should keep an eye out for.

1. **Time on Page**

Time on site for a specific page, relative to the length of the included video and supporting content, is a good indicator of how much users are engaging with your material. Track this metric relative to other, similar pages without video (as per the SEOmoz case study at the start of this guide) to see if the addition of video is having a positive effect for user engagement. Use Google Analytics (or equivalent) to track the average time spent by users on each of your pages.

2. **Community Activity**

If you’ve enabled comments on blog pages, are more people engaging with posts containing video than posts without? Are you videos sparking activity and debate on Twitter, Google+ and other social networks? Use the aforementioned social media measurement tools to track activity and shares.

3. **Engagement with Video**

This can often be tracked with the analytics provided by your video hosting platform and will offer the most concrete evidence for, or against, improved user engagement. Some hosting packages (including Wistia, Vzaar and Brightcove) also allow you to integrate “video play” tracking in Google Analytics. Below are some examples of hosting platform engagement statistics, with explanations of how to read the information provided.
**Wistia**

Wistia provide one of the best analytics systems of any third party video hosting solution. With Wistia, you can track trends across videos by category, track views by geographical location and get specific insights about user engagement.

![Graph showing engagement over time with Wistia](image)

The blue section of the graph shows engagement over time, with steeper downward slopes indicating a greater number of people clicking away from the content – presumably disengaged. The orange section of the graph indicates where users are rewinding and re-watching the content, identifying a period of greater active engagement. Your graphs will always be declining slopes, but the key to measuring relative success is decreasing the steepness of the decline.

Another fantastically useful feature of the Wistia analytics is the “explanation” box, which appears underneath the graph for each video. This box generates a short paragraph summarising the data and key takeaways from the content, meaning you can quickly copy-paste the information and include it in a report for your client or boss.

**Vimeo**

The Vimeo Pro and Vimeo Plus packages provide relatively detailed information about engagement with your video. To access the statistics - go to your Vimeo account at vimeo.com, choose the video you want to see analytics for, then click on the “see full statistics” link shown below:
From here, you can see plays over time, plays across the different embedded versions of the video and track the geographical locations of your audience.

Total loads indicate how many times the embedded player loads on page and should be seen essentially as a measurement of page views. Total plays indicates the number of times users have clicked the play button. When measuring engagement of video on your own site, you should be looking to see trends where the green line is matching the form of the yellow line, ideally with as small a gap between the two as possible.

YouTube

YouTube offers excellent free analytics, allowing you to track likes and dislikes, shares, audience retention and how many new subscribers you get off the back of each video.

The main thing Google/YouTube use to rank a video and determine the quality, is user engagement. You can get a snapshot of how this appears to them through the analytics on YouTube for each video under the “audience retention” tab for any video with over 1000 views.

There are two types of graph available – “Absolute audience retention” and “Relative audience retention”.

![Graphs showing performance and engagement metrics](image)
Absolute retention works in a similar way to the Wistia graph mentioned previously, but with YouTube – users rewinding and re-watching parts of the video contributes to the overall engagement metric – meaning it’s possible to have >100% retention at some points during your video. Therefore, with the YouTube Absolute retention graph, a mostly flat graph should be considered par, with fluctuations up and down indicating particularly engaging or disengaging points in the your video.

Relative audience retention is probably the more useful graph for determining the overall quality of your video – with the Y-axis markers providing a useful benchmark for the quality of your content versus competing offerings. Ideally, you want the whole of your video to be performing at an “above average” level; so if the graph dramatically dips at points, this is a clear indicator that it may be worth re-editing the content to improve overall flow.

**IMPROVED ON-SITE CONVERSIONS**

Conversion tracking through analytics should be the main way you measure conversion rate improvements, but it’s also worth looking for increased sales overall and lower bounce/exit rates; as an increase in conversions may happen on a multi-touch basis over an extended period.

1. **Conversion Tracking**

   Ensure you have goals and conversion funnels set up properly in your analytics package. [Here is a good tutorial for Google Analytics](#).

2. **Sales**

   Carefully monitor online sales, product enquiries and cart abandonment levels. As well as improving sales, your video may help to reduce the amount of enquiries you receive by answering some of the main FAQs.

3. **Exit Rate & Bounce Rate**

   Look at the page level metrics before and after the introduction of your video content; but also keep an eye on the site-wide levels as a whole. If you’re implementing a large amount of video content site-wide, then you should hopefully see an overall drop.
INCREASED TRAFFIC

If you’re aiming to get video rich snippet results in the search engine results pages, it’s likely in order to improve click through rate and therefore traffic for a specific term/set of terms. Measure this by tracking the organic search traffic from the target terms, and the overall search traffic to that page.

1. **Search Traffic to the Page from Targeted Keywords**

   Pick out the relevant keyword(s) in your organic search traffic report and look for increased traffic over time. Focus on percentage increases rather than looking for a considerable expansion in the number of visits, as Google’s recent privacy changes will mean that a significant number of visitors coming to your site through organic search referrals will show up in your analytics as keyword “(not provided)”

2. **Overall Non-Paid Search Traffic to the Page**

   In order to combat the loss of data caused by (not provided) keyword data, also check to see if more search traffic, irrespective of keyword, is coming to the page. Assuming ranking has increased or you’ve begun to get rich snippet results for your videos, you should see a slight uplift in organic search traffic. Any increase in referring traffic will indicate that users are promoting your content socially or through email.

3. **Rich Snippet Testing**

   Use the [Google Rich Snippet Testing Tool](https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/rich-snippets) to check to see if your page is receiving a video rich snippet result, but be aware that the tool does not always provide correct information and won’t be relevant for every keyword the page ranks for. Keep an eye on the site-wide levels as a whole. If you’re implementing a large amount of video content site-wide, then you should hopefully see an overall drop.

LINKS

The main measure of success for a link building campaign should be the number of overall links accrued, through both embeds and contextual references. However, it’s also worth tracking social shares – which, whether or not they help improve overall rankings are still valuable referrals and to a greater or lesser extent, fundamentally a “link”.

1. **Inbound Links**

   There are several good tools available online which allow you to explore links pointing to a specific page. At Distilled, we recommend [Open Site Explorer](https://.opensiteexplorer.org), [Majestic SEO](https://www.majestic.com) and Ahrefs, all of which have both paid and free versions. Bear in mind when using these tools that it can often take several weeks before the respective crawlers pick up on new links.
2. **Embeds**

In addition to using the aforementioned backlink analysis tools, in some instances, it’s also possible to pick up on new embedded versions of your video using the analytics from your hosting provider.

**Wistia**

Exporting events as a CSV from a video stats page will provide you with a list of video plays over time, indicating the location of the playback in each instance. Removing the duplicates in Excel will then give you a nice list of all the different embeds.

**Vimeo Pro**

Within “Advanced Stats”, the Embed tab provides a full list of all the embedded versions of a video, with respective play counts.

**YouTube**

While, if you’re looking to build links back to your domain you shouldn’t be hosting on YouTube, it can be worth tracking the links & embeds to any of your YouTube videos as part of a wider relationship building campaign. If someone embeds one of your YouTube videos, it’s possible that they’ll be open to further engagements in the future.
Check the following variations of the YouTube URL to pick up all the links in Open Site Explorer, AHrefs and Majestic SEO.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Url Example</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dQw4w9WgXcQ">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dQw4w9WgXcQ</a></td>
<td>The core YouTube URL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dQw4w9WgXcQ&amp;feature=player_embedded">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dQw4w9WgXcQ&amp;feature=player_embedded</a></td>
<td>The link from an embedded Player</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dQw4w9WgXcQ&amp;feature=related">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dQw4w9WgXcQ&amp;feature=related</a></td>
<td>The link from “related” panel on YouTube.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/embed/dQw4w9WgXcQ">http://www.youtube.com/embed/dQw4w9WgXcQ</a></td>
<td>The Embedded version of the video</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. **Social Shares**

   Use the aforementioned tools to track activity and mentions.

4. **Overall Site Rankings**

   The goal of a link building campaign is typically improved rankings. While this shouldn’t be the primary metric you use to measure success, it is worth keeping track of your placement in the search engine results pages to see if the new inbound links you’ve built are helping to move things in the right direction. SEOmoz and Authority Labs are both good tools for rank tracking.

**PAID PLACEMENT CAMPAIGNS**

Google provide excellent measurement for video campaigns within the adwords framework, which allows you to track impressions (people who’ve been shown your video), website clicks (the people who clicked through from your video to your website), CTR (the percentage of people who go from watching the video to clicking through to your site) and the percentage of the video your audience normally watches through before clicking away.
1. **Referrals**

The most obvious metric to determine the value of your paid placements is the referrals to your site. Divide the number of clicks by the total cost of your campaign to determine the average cost per click (CPC). You can then measure this figure against the average value of a visitor to your site to ascertain whether or not you are getting ROI from your paid video marketing campaign.

2. **Engagement**

Track the “video played to” figures to determine how engaging your video ad. As a rule, the more of your ad that users tend to watch through, the better and more engaging the content is. The better and more engaging an ad is, the more audiences will click through to your site.

> “The ability to analyse the point to which a video advert was played is a great benefit of this form of advertising. While clickthrough rate, on site metrics and conversion/goal tracking are all massively important, this simple piece of information can highlight sections of an advert where abandonment occurs and allow new iterations to be created that hold attention where previously interest was lost.”

Richard Cotton - Head of Paid Search, Distilled

3. **Conversions**

Are referrals from your campaign providing converting traffic? Use your analytics package to determine the goal completion rate from the video campaign referrals and match this up against the typical conversion rates on your site. If the conversion rates are lower than normal, this could be a clear indicator of dissonance between the style and quality of your ad and the style and quality of your website.
The immediate future of online video is fairly clear. New technologies will pave the way for higher quality streaming, with production and bandwidth costs continuing to reduce, improving accessibility to video for companies of all sizes.

Video will stop being something companies can engage with in order to gain competitive advantage and start being something that companies need to have expertise in, in order to compete in the content marketing space.

Outside of increased uptake and prevalence, we’re likely to see further trends towards interactivity and enhanced value for search engine optimisation.

**HIGHER QUALITY CONTENT**

Improving capabilities of servers and internet connections means that video quality will continue to expand and improve, with increased bandwidth speeds allowing for higher bitrate streaming and bufferless playback. It won’t be long before 4K Ultra-High Definition TV (UHDTV) with 3840 x 2160 resolution arrives and web video is already set to follow suit in order to make use of the super-high resolutions on devices like The new iPad and Macbook Pro with Retina display. YouTube announced support for 4K resolutions over 2 years ago, but lack of consumer demand and connection speed has meant that uptake has been relatively low to date.

Companies will have to initially pay a great deal to produce content at this resolution, but as cameras improve, costs will reduce and in a few years time, 4K Ultra HD will likely be “the new HD” – a differentiator of quality that serves to give competitive advantage by virtue of the barrier to entry.

**INTERACTIVITY**

HTML5 has opened up a wealth of new possibilities with video, possibilities which will continue to develop and define the way video is integrated as part of an html page.

One example of this is the continuous playback of video across a site, while users are browsing from page to page. Rob Ousbey has built a test site to demonstrate how this can be achieved using HTML5 pushState() and popState().

Video will also be used to trigger wider activity on a page, through JavaScript libraries such as popcorn.js. Popcorn allows videos to move beyond being simply a TV style frame and become an integral part of a webpages infrastructure - something that adjusts visible text during playback, shows specific images or maps at certain points and turns video from a tool which augments on-page content to a tool that defines the entire user journey.
The next stage of development for Google is quite clear – indicated by patent applications and the challenge of crawlers keeping up to date with the technologies being used by developers to build sites.

**Better indexing of iframes and JavaScript**

There will likely come a day, in the not so distant future, when Googlebot is consistently able to pick out and index video players in iframes or those delivered dynamically via JavaScript. While web developers will still have to be wary of sending duplicate content signals to the search engine crawlers, these developments will allow for greater flexibility of embed styles for those wishing to receive rich snippets in the search engine results pages.

**Indexing the Content Within Video Files**

Google is currently registering patents that will enable it to crawl videos as a series of images; allowing Google to find relationships between videos as it current does with images.

This will allow for better recognition of duplicate video content on both YouTube and other hosting solutions and will also allow Google to find trends across the image styles of successful and unsuccessful videos – paving the way for algorithmic appraisal of “good” and “bad” with respect to video. The consequence of these developments will mean it’s imperative to ensure that, like text and imagery, video content is always both unique and exceptional. While you can currently get video to rank with rich snippets (mostly) irrespective of actual video quality, this will not be possible in a few years time.

**Improvements to the YouTube Tool Set**

YouTube is continually expanding its toolset – recently launching both online editing software and the ability for partners to “link” a YouTube account with an external domain. It’s not clear yet what functionality this “linking” will provide – but it may allow better control of rich snippets for partners, allowing them to direct rich snippet results for YouTube videos to their own domains rather than the canonical YouTube.com versions.

So, will this development mean the value 3rd party hosting becomes redundant, making YouTube the default best service to host with in order to get rich snippets? Almost certainly not.

While it’ll become easier and simpler to get rich snippet results to your own domain with embedded YouTube videos, this will not invalidate the need for secure third party solutions. As previously mentioned, pages you want to rank with rich snippets are, more often than not, commercial pages; the kind of page type best served by product videos. Such product videos invariably perform badly on the YouTube.com, due to the lack of context provided by a YouTube video page. If you are not planning on seeding the content into the YouTube community, there is very little point in using YouTube as the hosting solution.
Moreover, if you have a YouTube video that’s generating a lot of interest, then the YouTube domain ranking shouldn’t be a bad thing for you, as users can discover your channel, browse further and see the rest of your videos.

Additionally, Google have consciously made the decision to only allow users to include external links as annotations when paying for advertising; meaning anyone wishing to include clickable links on top of a video or control share buttons and embed codes, will still be best off choosing third party solutions.

**RETIRED OF FLASH**

Flash is already on the way out. Adobe have stopped support for flash players on mobile devices and the continued growth of mobile internet usage will force sites to make the switch to HTML5 video in order to remain competitive. While flash will remain supported for desktop devices in the foreseeable future, innovation and further developments will skew heavily towards HTML5 and JavaScript. Adobe themselves have made headways into this space with Adobe Edge, a program (currently in preview) designed to allow non-coders to create flash-style interactive content that works entirely with HTML5, CSS3 and JavaScript. Tumult Hype is a similar App, available exclusively for Mac OS X.

**KEEPING AHEAD OF THE GAME**

Online video marketing is moving fast. New tools and technologies are constantly improving, new avenues for seeding and promotion are coming to the fore and changes in Google’s algorithm will continually alter best practice for SEO. Keeping up with these developments is no small task, but you can future proof your strategy by developing a library of content that you can easily repurpose to take advantage of new and innovative integrations of HTML5 video and the opportunities upcoming search engine technology will inevitably provide.

However, the single most important piece of advice for anyone considering online marketing with video, is to start now. The best way to learn and become good at this stuff is by trying and testing; getting user feedback, learning the best avenues for your work and evolving a content strategy that utilises video effectively and where appropriate.

Your first attempts will probably be suboptimal and, as with most marketing strategies, instant success is extremely rare: this stuff takes time and is hard. However, with reasonable cameras now included in every smartphone, hosting essentially free for beginners, and editing software a mere fraction of the price it was only a couple of years ago – there’s nothing to lose except through inaction.

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**About the Author**

Phil Nottingham is a Consultant at Distilled in London. Phil studied Performance Arts at the Central School of Speech and Drama from 2005 to 2008 and worked for three years in theatre and broadcast technology before joining the world of internet marketing in 2011.

The Distilled Guide to Online Video Marketing was written by Phil Nottingham and Designed by Matt Mitchell-Camp, with contributions from the unprecedentedly brilliant Distilled teams in London, New York and Seattle. Special thanks go to Rand Fishkin, Nick Sayers, Destinee Cushing, Kiel deValera, Ed Tucker and Lianne Froggett for all their help and support.
**CHECKLIST**

★ **Content gap analysis** - What do people care about? What might work in your niche? What have other people done in different verticals?

★ **Form gap analysis** - What style of content is appropriate for your idea? Is video really the right form?

★ **Work out what you want to achieve** - Pick out the core purpose of your content. Should you build different bits of content to achieve different aims or can you hit all your goals with one bit of content?

★ **Define the technical implementation** - Hosting, Embedding, Integration etc.

★ **Define Subject, theme and dramaturgy** – What is the content about, What is the overarching message? In what context will the audience be experiencing the content?

★ **Pre-production** - Determine the level and style of production required. Create a script, storyboard or plan. Source external talent where necessary

★ **Pre-outreach** - Find people who care about your idea and will help you promote it

★ **Production** - Build the content.

★ **User testing** – Determine changes that need to be made based on feedback. Work out the best location for the video within the page design, define an appropriate and effective call to action for the video.

★ **Launch** - Upload and embed the content

★ **Outreach** - Promote through the appropriate channels.

★ **Win** - Bask in the glory of your brilliance