Video Marketing on a Small Business Budget

In a few of my recent columns, I have suggested that small businesses should consider using video in their marketing strategies because more and more data in the marketing world are showing that this enhances sales and customer response. But, I got a good question from a reader this week who said “get real, Dean, how can a small business afford to do this?” That is a good question, so let me expand a little.

In fact, I sought the help of Tyler Lessard, CMO of Vidyard. What a neat guy! He is the Chief Marketing Officer at a company that is a pioneer and leading global provider of Video Marketing and Video Analytics solutions for marketers, sales teams, and corporate learning. I was excited to hear him relate that he “also has the incredible opportunity to be a Space Camp Counsellor at their annual video marketing summit. I picked his brains on this topic through his article for “Target Marketing”.

Small business owners may not think they have the time, money or manpower to invest in video marketing, but it really is easier than many people think. While there are certainly multi-million-dollar video marketing campaigns out there, small business owners can and do see a big impact from much more modest investments in video marketing. In fact, most people already have everything they need to create and share video content without spending extra dollars.

Just like in Hollywood, your video marketing efforts should start on the page, rather than on camera. Before you start filming, you should have a clear idea of the end-goal for your video. Do you want to attract new customers, or encourage existing customers to come back more often? There are plenty of different types of videos you can make, but without a specific business goal as a benchmark, you run the risk of wasting time and effort, and of viewers asking: “What’s happening here?”

Tell the Right Story: To get the most out of your limited budget, you’ll want to choose the right video to start. How can you know what’s right? That’s why everything starts on the page — revisit your goal and decide if you want to walk your customers through the way your products work (explainer videos), tell them how your small business got started (origin stories) or introduce them to other customers who love your product (customer advocacy).

Each of those approaches will accomplish a different goal. If you want to encourage customers to buy your product, an explainer video is a great place to start. If you want to make your customers feel like part of a community, an origin story can help them feel like insiders.
If you’re still having trouble figuring out which video best accomplishes your goal, consider asking your customers what they’d like to know about your business, or what it was that convinced them to seek you out in the first place. Knowing what customers think about when they think about you can help you figure out what parts of your business to highlight in your video content.

**There’s More to Filming Than Point-and-Shoot:** Once you’ve settled on your goal and the type of video you’re going to use to reach it, write a script or cue cards. Video marketing works so well because it uses both audial and visual cues to appeal to viewers’ emotions. Don’t just stand in front of a camera and shout your company tagline — take the time to tell a story that both speaks *and* shows the message you’re trying to get across.

Now it’s time to put on your director’s hat. First, find the best camera angles and lighting for the equipment you’re working with. An iPhone and a DSLR video camera are very different, but both can shoot an effective and good-looking piece of video content, as long as you take time to figure out what looks good and what doesn’t.

You’ll also want to use this opportunity to get acquainted with video editing software. Depending on what type of computer you have, you may have free software that can cut and splice together pieces of your footage, among other things. If you’ve done your prep work, shooting the video should actually be a fairly simple part of the process.

**Finding the Real Value of Video Marketing:** Once filming has wrapped, what do you do with your video content? YouTube, right? Well, not necessarily, or at least not *just* YouTube. See, the real value of video marketing content is multi-faceted. Uploading video to your website can increase your odds of being on the first page of Google search results **by a factor of 50.**

You’ll want to create a YouTube channel in part because it is the second-largest search engine in the world (behind Google), and also because you want to offer a complete and compelling description for your video — add your whole script, while you’re at it. Google and YouTube robots look for keywords in the video description, meaning a good description can only help your video perform better.

Video marketing content isn’t just for websites, either; it can make a positive impact at any point in your sales funnel. Why not add your “origin story” video to an email newsletter for current customers? Doing so can actually double email click-throughs. Or perhaps set your social media accounts to automatically send new followers a link to an “explainer” video. **About 40 percent of consumers** say watching a video on mobile increases the odds they’ll then make a purchase.
Setting up Sequels: However you decide to use (and re-use) your video marketing content, remember that everything starts — and ends — with your business goals. Once you’ve created and begun to use your video marketing content, tracking its effectiveness can show you the return on your investment and inform your efforts for next time.

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