

WATCH THIS!

The Definitive Reference Guide
to Video Marketing

by

DAVID SPARK

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Roughly a quarter of search and content consumption traffic is focused on video. While companies know they need to produce video, they're still struggling to maintain a presence. It's complicated, it takes unique skills, and it can be very costly to sustain an active branded video channel. Some become paralyzed as to what to do next, as they don't even know what they're up against. This ebook simplifies the online video process by breaking down each element and shows how it contributes to capturing your target audience. Here are the top findings from our research.

- **The invisibility trap.** Companies that have poor to non-existent video presences can't be seen on YouTube. That means they're simply invisible to the second most trafficked site on the Internet.¹
- **Funding not commensurate with online trends.** It doesn't appear B2B tech companies are keeping in step. Given trends in search, social, and traffic, about a quarter of a company's search and social marketing budget should be spent on video.
- **Loose to non-existent branding.** Video branding efforts are frightfully not in line with corporate branding. We were shocked to find this happening even with the biggest Fortune 500 tech companies.
- **Usual suspects.** With few notable exceptions, most B2B tech companies have limited creativity with video. Most of their video content fits expected molds such as customer testimonials, presentation videos, and animated explainer videos.
- **Mostly one-off production.** B2B tech companies are struggling to commit to ongoing video efforts, which are critical for building audience and community around their content.
- **Easy opportunities missed.** Online video has its low-hanging fruit, which are simple opportunities that can have a big impact. Some of the easiest and necessary production options were missed, almost universally.



- **Online video introduces new complications.** The sheer number of variables needed to manage online video is daunting. Being successful with online video requires the constant juggling and management of dozens of disparate variables. Quality video production is only one of those variables.

AVOID THE INVISIBILITY TRAP

To be visible on Google, the most trafficked website, you need a website. Almost all companies have a brand-consistent website.

But to appear on YouTube you have to produce videos. That's not nearly as easy. Nor is it critical to starting a business.

But when a company fails to produce brand-appropriate videos, they're making a conscious choice to be invisible to the second-most trafficked website on the Internet.²

Let that sink in for a second.

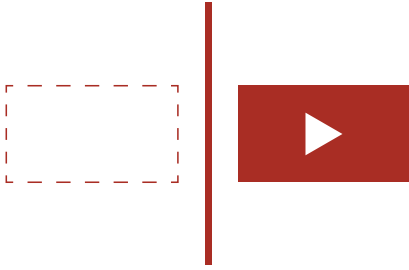


Companies have enormous marketing budgets for search engine optimization, search engine marketing, and content marketing. It's all designed to target people who are proactively searching for information. By not investing in video, the money spent in search and social media marketing simply doesn't reflect where people are searching and consuming content.

- YouTube accounts for 28 percent of total searches on Google.³
- YouTube has 25 percent of the market share of social networks.⁴

If you're just measuring eyeballs and focusing on Google search, *your company should be spending about one-quarter of their search and social marketing budget on video marketing.*





FALLING SHORT ON VIDEO GIVES YOUR COMPETITION AN ADVANTAGE

If your company chooses not to be on YouTube, not only are you invisible to this audience, your competitors are at a great advantage to be visible with no challenge from your business.

Relative to text-based media, video is an uncrowded space and proven to be a more attractive option.

Video drives consumption preference, inbound traffic, improved search results, and more time spent on page.

- Four times as many consumers would rather watch a video about a product than read about it.⁵
- When video and text are on the same page, 72 percent of visitors would rather watch the video to learn about a product or service.⁶
- Blog posts that have video attract three times as many inbound links as blog posts without video.⁷ The increase in inbound links probably speaks to why having a video on a landing page makes it 53 percent more likely to show up the first page of search.⁸
- A landing page that has a video leads to dramatically more time spent on the page. As compared to pages that don't have video, one study showed an increase in 25 percent more time⁹ and another showed 2.6 times more time spent on the page.¹⁰

VIDEO CONVERTS



Lastly, in my effort to try to convince you to spend a significant portion of your marketing budget on video, here is some data on conversions:



- Companies that use videos in their marketing experience 27 percent higher click-through-rates (CTRs) and 34 percent higher web conversion rates than those that don't.¹¹
- Videos that appear in search results have a 41 percent higher clickthrough rate than plain-text results.¹²
- Companies that use videos in their marketing grow revenue 49 percent faster year-on-year than those that don't.¹³



OK, I GET IT, USE VIDEO, BUT...



Even though search, consumption, and conversion trends favor online video, B2B tech companies' entry into video is often viewed as experimentation rather than a competitive tool that must be mastered in order to succeed. This is evidenced by the high number of "one-off" videos and video series that die off only after a handful of episodes. When anticipations run high and immediate return on investment (ROI) falls short, frustration sinks in, with little desire to throw more money at what is seen as a failure.

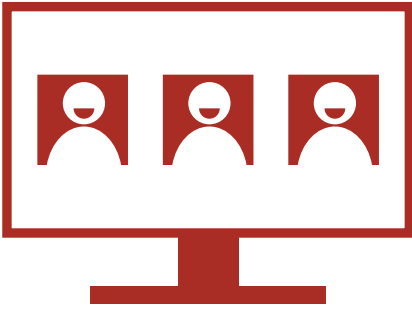


An organization that has no brand in video can't assume they're going to instantly build a video media brand with just one or even a handful of videos. It's literally never happened in the history of media, yet the expectation always looms and it's unrealistic.



It's disturbing to see how some of the largest tech companies, often in the Fortune 500, look to YouTube as a dumping ground for whatever random video they happen to produce. The videos don't appear to be made for an audience yet are delivering on a corporate marketing need, such as presentation videos and customer testimonials.



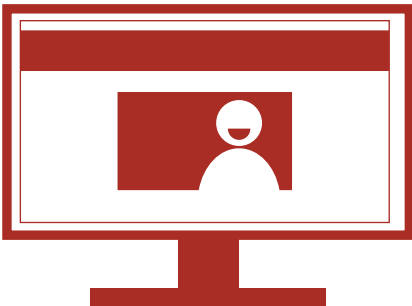


A YouTube presence is an enormous opportunity to build an ongoing relationship with an interested and subscribing audience. This can be far more powerful than an email list because it's about personal engagement. It's similar to the relationship that can be made with a podcast audience. We believe it's even more powerful because a YouTube presence delivers the audience, algorithm, email marketing, and traffic of YouTube, the second most trafficked website on the Internet.



HELP IS ON THE WAY... JUST KEEP READING

Beyond just the complications of video production, there are a seemingly endless number of variables to manage the publishing and promotion of online video.



In addition to the video tips and opportunities, I provided some context as to what the competition is doing. We conducted research into how B2B tech companies are utilizing video. I wanted to show that this space is still wide open for everyone. Even Fortune 500 tech companies that have enormous budgets are falling short. We didn't see one example of any one company doing everything right.

Tech companies that have little-to-no video presence were not considered in our analysis.

There are multiple video platforms. We looked at the ones we believe have the greatest impact for B2B tech companies.

FORMAT FOR THIS GUIDE

This guide and the ensuing research is focused into two parts.

The first section of this guide is focused on producing and maintaining a YouTube presence. While there are many ways to post videos on the Internet, we have put a significant focus on YouTube since the platform has 78.8 percent of the market share in video.¹⁴

The second section touches a little on video production issues, plus posting videos to Facebook, LinkedIn, and using platforms



that give you more information as to who is watching the content.

Each tip begins with a basic description, and then the following format elements:

OPPORTUNITY

How and why you want to take advantage of this feature to present or market your videos.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

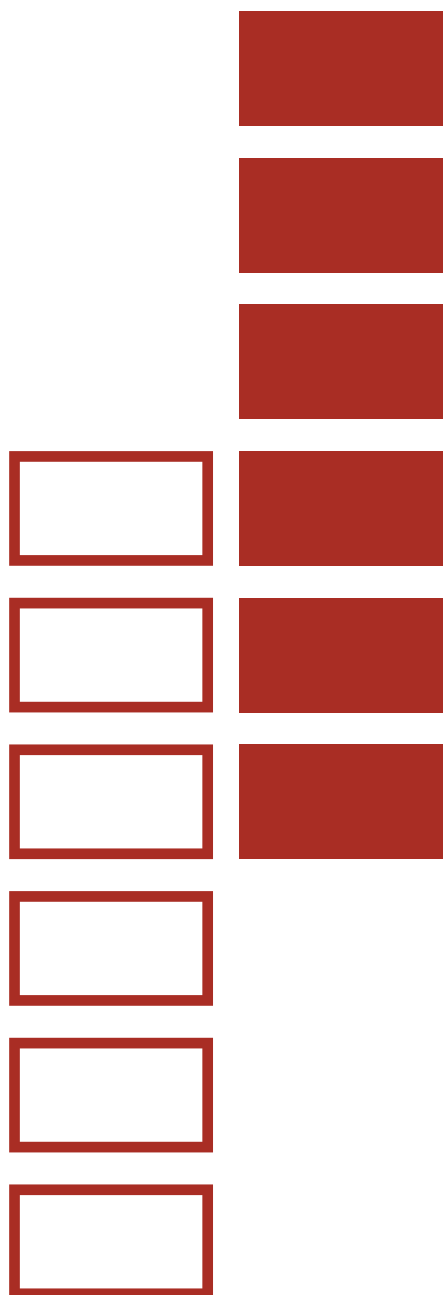
Since there is far from a “one size fits all” methodology, I address various elements to consider when trying to take advantage of this opportunity.

CURRENT TRENDS

We contained our analysis to 50 B2B tech companies across almost all 56 variables. In this section we provide details as to how tech companies are or are not taking advantage of this specific opportunity.

DIFFICULTY AND IMPACT

These opportunities vary dramatically in terms of how complicated they are to pull off and their overall effect once implemented. I created a subjective 1 to 5 scale of *difficulty* and *impact*. Ideally, you’ll first want to focus on the items that are the least complicated to pull off (low *difficulty* score) and yet provide the greatest return (high *impact* score).





YOUTUBE

1

CREATE BANNER THAT EXPLAINS/INVITES

It's impossible to ignore a YouTube banner. It's big and at the top of the page. Your banner introduces and welcomes visitors to your YouTube page. This single image should answer a visitor's most basic questions:

- Where did I just land?
- Is this YouTube channel for me?
- Should I venture further?

OPPORTUNITY

The banner image is an enormous communications OPPORTUNITY to explain what the channel is about, what the users can expect if they subscribe to this channel, and if possible, how often the videos will be published.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

- Don't just add the company logo or tag line in the banner, as it probably won't communicate the content and value of the YouTube channel.
- Make it clear what the channel is about and the value proposition for subscribing.
- Depending on the browser you're using, your logo may appear in the banner (Internet Explorer) or right below the banner (Chrome, Firefox). Plan your design accordingly.



- If you're producing a regular series with the same people in the videos, include photos of those people.
- If you can commit to a regular publishing schedule, make it clear in the banner how often your videos are published (e.g., "New videos every Tuesday").

CURRENT TREND

More than one-third of corporate B2B tech channels provide zero explanation in their banner as to what content their YouTube page offers.

This lack of explanation probably stems from the fact that most B2B YouTube pages have little-to-zero consistent content direction.

Difficulty: 

Impact: 



2

PROMOTE NEW NEWS IN THE YOUTUBE BANNER

To get the most eyeballs and traffic, news sites put their latest and most valuable news right at the very top of the page. Hey, whaddya know, that's exactly where your YouTube banner is.

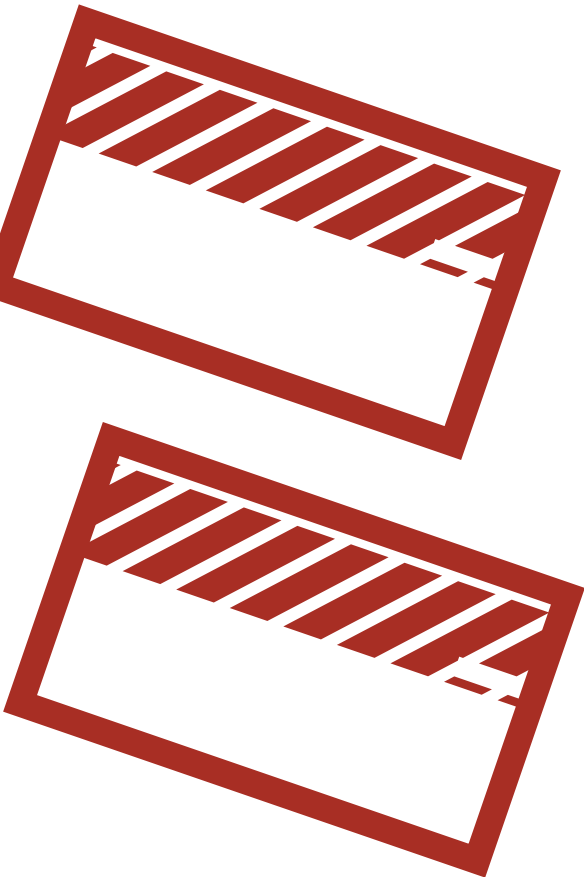
OPPORTUNITY

Your YouTube banner does not need to stay static. It's perfectly positioned to announce news, events, new products, live streams, or even specific videos you want visitors to check out.

Assuming you're announcing news on the company website, you should also announce it within your YouTube banner as well, especially if it's relevant and you have a video.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

- Architect a standard design with a designated space promoting the latest information. Don't overload the visitor with information. What's the bare minimum of words and imagery that will direct them where you'd like them to go?
- Update the banner. Don't leave a banner up promoting an event that's passed.

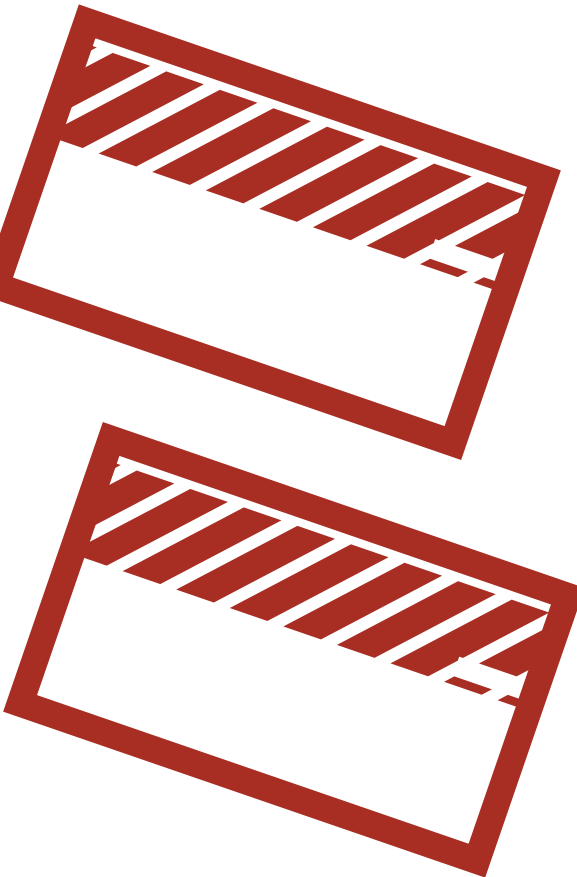


CURRENT TREND

In our analysis, we only saw one company (Infosys) take advantage of delivering new news via the YouTube banner.

Difficulty: 

Impact: 

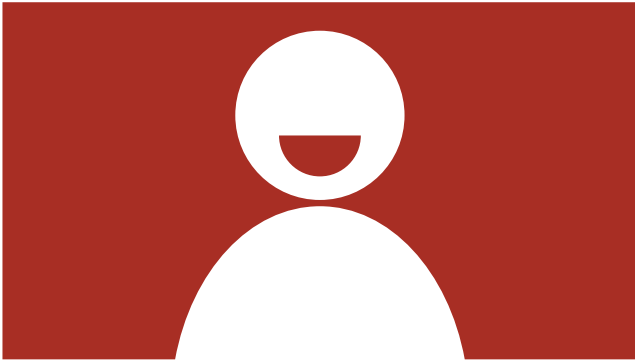




3

WELCOMING VIDEO FOR NEW VISITORS

YouTube has a commonly used feature that allows a channel manager to specify which video will autoplay the moment a new visitor or anyone who has yet to subscribe arrives at your YouTube page. Very few companies take advantage of this gigantic opportunity to connect with a new and curious audience.



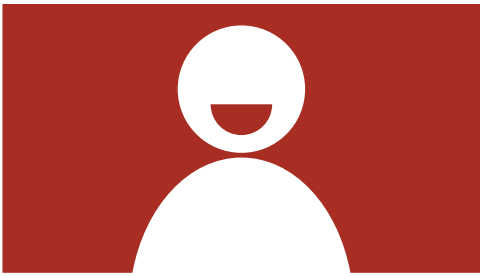
On blogs and websites, publishers shy away from posting autoplay videos (especially with sound on) because the general consensus is they're annoying. At the time of writing this report, Facebook periodically adds sound to its autoplay videos to the consternation of most everyone.

Where's that sound coming from?

It's the first response when you hear a video start playing that you didn't initiate. The moment we hear them, we're immediately trying to figure how to turn them off because the video appears in a different place.

Conversely, it appears that since its inception YouTube has trained users to assume the featured video will autoplay when they visit anyone's YouTube page. Unlike the appearance of autoplay videos elsewhere on the web, on YouTube it's actually not annoying. It's expected.





OPPORTUNITY

This opportunity rivals the messaging on the banner as the most important first step a company can do to improve the value of their YouTube page.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

- Answer the question, “Why am I spending any time on your YouTube page?”
- What do you think a visitor would like to hear when landing on your YouTube page?

CURRENT TREND



Almost universally, companies presented either a well-produced advertisement or explainer video as their featured video. We saw no examples of videos welcome people to the company’s YouTube channel, explaining what they’re going to see, and enticing them to subscribe.

Six percent of the companies we looked at didn’t even bother changing the settings on YouTube to automatically play a featured video.

Difficulty:

Impact:





4

CAPTURE ATTENTION WITH FIRST WORDS HEARD VISITING YOUR PAGE

As mentioned previously, an autoplay video with sound is expected on a YouTube channel page. That first line of dialogue, if there is any, can be critical to roping in a curious audience.

OPPORTUNITY

This is a very unusual and powerful branding opportunity to deliver a full line of dialogue to an audience that has initiated interest in your company by first visiting your YouTube page.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

- Actually say something immediately. Don't open with just music.
- It's your chance to make a first impression. What do you think your visitors want to hear?
- The first line should entice the viewer to stick around for the second line. The second line should deepen that interest to the next line. This should continue until you've got enough material to hook them in.



CURRENT TREND

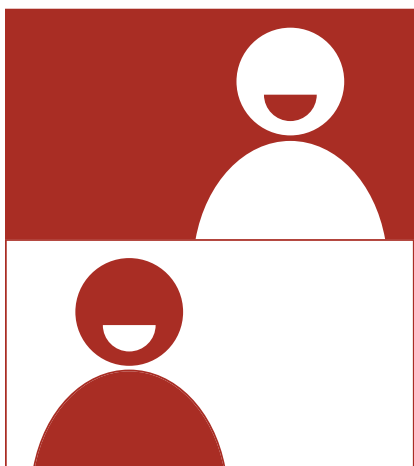
There's not much of a trend at all here. Since we didn't see any YouTube channel-specific welcoming videos, we didn't hear any first lines that specifically addressed the YouTube audience or acknowledged its location on a YouTube page.

No one appeared to put much value in that opening line as evidenced by some of the opening lines we did hear:

- "Technology touches all of us."
- "In today's digital world, the networked economy of brands, influencers, and customers, interacting across channels, has forever changed communications."
- "Here's the thing about creating what's next."
- "Twenty years ago when we first got into the server business, we were building a bridge to the future."
- "Imagine if you could build the perfect city or community."
- "Markets move quickly. Supply and demand is highly volatile. And supply chains are complex."
- "Every organization we talk to today is undergoing a major transformation to help them differentiate and be competitive in the marketplace."
- "Data protection is a heavy burden for companies to bear."
- "If you work in IT security, you know you have to keep your organization's critical assets safe."

Difficulty: 

Impact: 



5

HAVE A DIFFERENT INTRO VIDEO FOR NEW VISITORS VS. SUBSCRIBERS

YouTube gives creators the opportunity to present a different video for subscribers vs. non-subscribers.

OPPORTUNITY

A new visitor is highly receptive to a welcoming video that explains the channel. Conversely, that same welcoming video or a generic branding video would annoy a returning visitor who became a subscriber. They'd want to see something new. Take advantage of the option to adapt the featured video for these two audiences. Drive new visitors to subscribe and keep your current viewers happy so they don't unsubscribe.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

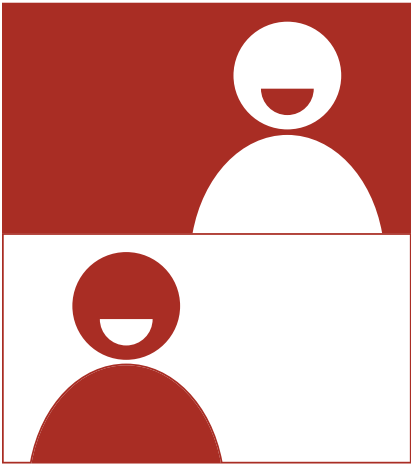
- For subscribers, it's often best to present the newest videos and/or latest announcements.
- For those yet to subscribe, a welcoming video that gives them reasons to subscribe is ideal (see opportunity #3).
- By not updating your page's featured video or leaving it as the same one for non-subscribers, it sends a message to your subscribers that you're simply not paying attention to the channel or to them.

CURRENT TREND

Forty percent of all companies we looked at either didn't have or didn't bother changing the featured video for subscribers.

Difficulty: 

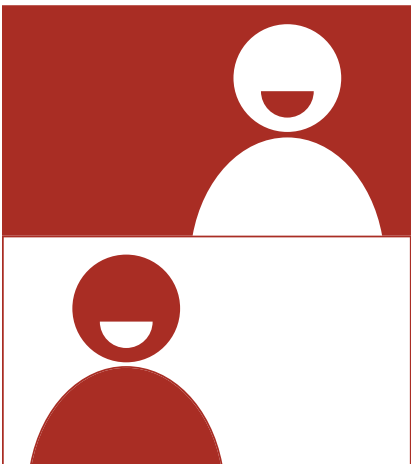
Impact: 



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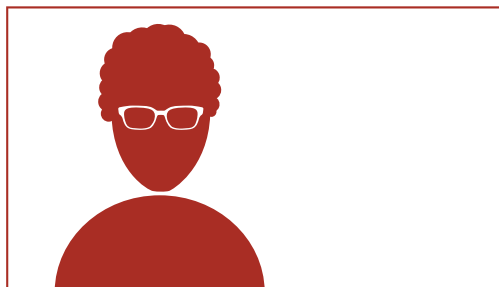
METHODOLOGY

For the businesses we analyzed, we looked at tech companies that had significant video presences. We focused on many Fortune 500 tech companies, but also looked at medium-sized companies as well. With a few exceptions, all our companies posted at least 100 videos on YouTube and published their most recent video within the past year.

Much of our analysis was subjectively determined on a 1-5 scale. Given that consuming video requires significant time investment, often we made spot checks on a video without actually watching it all the way through.

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Since 1996, Spark's work has appeared in more than 40 media outlets including eWEEK, Wired News, PCWorld, John C. Dvorak's "Cranky Geeks," and TechTV (formerly ZDTV). Spark also squandered more than a dozen years working as a touring standup comedian, a San Francisco tour guide, and comedy writer for The Second City in Chicago.

Today, Spark co-hosts the [Tear Down Show](#) and the [CISO/Security Vendor Relationship Podcast](#), and blogs regularly on the [Spark Minute](#). You can reach David at david@sparkmediasolutions.com.

Videos produced by Spark can be viewed at youtube.com/sparkmediasolutions and linkedin.com/in/davidspark

DESIGNER/ILLUSTRATOR: JOY POWERS

Joy Powers ([@joypowers](#)) is a multi-talented marketer with a passion for UI/UX, and has skills in art direction, design, animated video graphics, writing, editing, web development, and photography.

Powers is currently a partner with Spark Media Solutions, a B2B content marketing agency for the tech industry. She is responsible for creating the company's most popular content products and generating new revenue opportunities all while simultaneously cutting production costs by developing fast publishing techniques.

Prior to joining Spark Media Solutions, Powers served as the communications director for the Israeli Consulate in San Francisco. She also ran online marketing for the Jewish Community Federation in San Francisco.



SPARK MEDIA SOLUTIONS

Founded in 2007, [Spark Media Solutions](#) is a B2B content marketing agency for the tech industry. The San Francisco Bay Area company uses media production to jump-start relationships for their clients.

Spark Media Solutions' products are designed to deliver clients' needs such as:

- Search and social visibility
- Thought leadership
- Influencer relations
- Lead generation and conversions

The content agency utilizes its decades of relations with the tech elite to produce videos, articles, images, and podcasts that are thoughtful, educational, funny, and entertaining. For more than 11 years, the company has worked with many well-known [tech clients](#).



FURTHER READING ABOUT VIDEO BY DAVID SPARK

How to Train Yourself to Create Great Videos

<http://www.sparkminute.com/2013/11/25/how-to-train-yourself-to-create-great-videos/>



Coolest Things You Can Learn from an Online Video

<http://www.sparkminute.com/2013/02/21/coolest-things-you-can-learn-from-an-online-video/>



How to Be Really Successful Producing a Crappy Video

<http://www.sparkminute.com/2014/07/31/how-to-be-really-successful-producing-a-crappy-video/>

Five Video Strategies that Are Totally Worth the Effort

<http://www.sparkminute.com/2014/04/01/five-video-strategies-that-are-totally-worth-the-effort/>

20 Great Ideas for Your Next Corporate Video

<http://www.sparkmediasolutions.com/20-great-ideas-for-your-next-corporate-video/>

21 Tips for Producing Funny “Man on the Street” Videos

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