

USE VIDEO TO AMP UP YOUR INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Expert tips on using video to motivate, train, inform and engage.



INTRODUCTION

On April 23, 2005, the very first YouTube video was uploaded. Since then, there has been exponential growth in video. According to a 2020 report by MerchDope, in the last two years alone, watch time on YouTube has grown 60% year-over-year. More than 1.3 billion people use YouTube and 30 million visit the site daily, with 300 hours of video uploaded every minute. There is no doubt that YouTube prompted a seismic shift in how we deliver, take in, and retain information.

Marketers have embraced video as an effective way to reach customers. When it comes to reaching employees, organizations are advised to do the same. Here we share tips and guidance from industry experts on how to deploy video effectively to motivate, train, inform, and engage your employees.

According to AIHR Digital, 95% of employees are likely to retain 95% of a message when they watch a video; and 58% of executives would rather watch a video than read text.

Let's Get Real

Experts point to several reasons for the strength of video as a communications tool. One reason is the prevailing pop-culture and the issue of accessibility, where fun and quirky videos dominate social media platforms like Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook.

“Video can be informative and entertaining. It activates all the senses,” says Medo Eldin, founder, and chief creative officer of Prodigy Video Marketing. “For the first time, high quality video production and editing is available to all. It used to be only available to those who had deep pockets and could afford to produce TV commercials. But in just the last ten years, everyone can access and distribute videos. That power is available to all of us as people and as companies.”

With increased access and availability come higher expectations from employees (and every audience segment) that information from all sources will be engaging, entertaining, and easier to absorb.

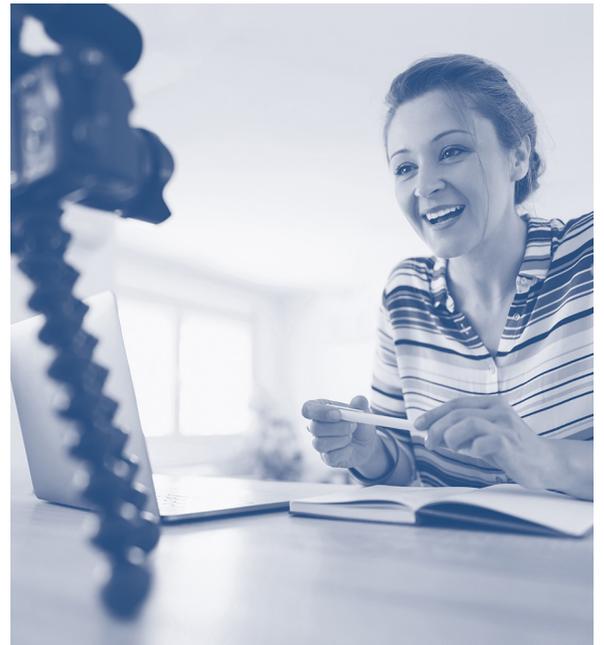
“This is fundamentally a question of culture. What type of corporate culture does your organization have? Or want to have? Companies certainly cannot claim to have a progressive, techno-savvy type of culture embracing diversity and the changing times, while speaking to their employees in a boring, vanilla corporate PowerPoint,” explains Amber Bradley, owner, and chief executive officer of The Calibration Group.

That doesn't mean you have to be funny if that's not your culture, she says. There are many ways to engage without being silly. But the number one goal should be to get real. To be authentic regarding your culture.

“When you know what you want to communicate, what you want your employees to remember, video can bring it to life in a way that no written materials or images can,” she says.

Basil Bearer, creative inventor and owner of Big Frog Custom T-shirts says that since we are all bombarded by so much information, companies would do well to get to the simple truth. Companies often err on the side of providing too much set up or explanation. But we just don't have that much time. We won't sit through the details.

“Keep it simple and clean,” he advises. “Ask yourself: ‘How do I get to this point as quickly and concisely as possible?’ Even though it may seem short, the viewer will appreciate it. It'll also get more hits and higher retention rates.”





5 Reasons to Use Video in Your Internal Comms Efforts

1. Engages audiences better than other types of communications.
2. Adds a more personal, human touch.
3. Is more affordable and cost-effective than ever.
4. Appeals to different learning styles and involves all the senses.
5. Offers a quicker way to convey complex messages.

The Strategic Value of Video

Videos can be ideal for delivering CEO messages, onboarding, training and education, morale boosting and team building, sharing corporate news updates, and imparting health, safety, and regulatory specifics. They can also be used to live-stream events.

Mr. Alan Langford, a communications strategist focused on technology and production, says, “New procedures, new products, new technologies, new strategies, and case studies can all be created as different types of video. You may have short daily interactions with the CEO, weekly or monthly leadership messaging, and hour-long presentations that are held quarterly. The daily segments may only be 2 minutes or less.”

Repetition is also important, Mr. Eldin says. “Strive to publish something at the least twice a month, or if possible once a week. The more frequent, the more employees will expect it and even look for it. You will get far greater value, multiple times over, by publishing weekly over just twice a month.”

If the key is repetition, success hinges on your ability to build enough content for at least six months’ worth of posts. To generate a volume of ideas, Mr. Eldin recommends bringing in stakeholders from all levels of the organization for a brainstorming session. As a group, define your objective for the day. For example: “We want 25 ideas for videos we can produce.”

By defining ideas (and not judging them to be good or bad), you can generate a long list quickly. The key he says is to cross the threshold of the first 15 ideas. After that, the creativity and fun will start to flow.

Once you have a list of ideas, the production is easy. He recommends considering a core set of video structures that can be produced repeatedly. These may include employee interviews, “how-to,” or explainer videos. With a structure in place, your team can determine how many of each type of video to release each month.

“The more you can standardize, the easier it will be to develop and scale because those video products will always be done the same way, and aired the same way,” he says. “As an example, you may interview six employees on the same day to create six different video segments. If you distribute two employee interviews per month, you’ve just developed three months’ worth of content in a single day. Your time to start and stop is reduced, you develop expertise more quickly, and you have the ability to batch your production process.”



According to Limelight’s State of Online Video 2019, users spent a weekly average of 6 hours and 48 minutes watching online videos – a **59%** increase from just three years prior.

(www.engageforsuccess.org)

THE SOUND OF MUSIC



“Music is incredibly important. It makes a huge difference in how people view and receive the video. Many times, organizations will use some type of generic music. It’s worth subscribing to a good royalty free music library. When you create your productions, think about the emotion of the music, the tempo and have it match the content of the video. That will make it more powerful, watchable, and convey your ideas more effectively.” Mr. Eldin says.

Less is More

Across the board, experts note that shorter video is better and more engaging.

“Length and depth are important. Pick two or three things you want your employees to know after watching the video. Typically, we do videos with strategic topics, where each video runs 2 to 2-1/2 minutes,” Ms. Bradley says.

Mr. Bearer concurs, “The shorter, the better. Sometimes, 15 seconds seems an eternity. We will even try videos that are 3 to 5 seconds, short phrases, with three- and four-word snippets.”

Creating a mix of different lengths can also make sense. “Videos that are shorter get the most traction. But you have to look at each specific subject matter. If it’s training on a new procedure, the video may need more length to it. Five minutes might be too short to cover one subject, while 30 seconds may be too long for another,” Mr. Langford says. “You can layer them. First, send a 5-minute piece, followed by reminders with 20-second video snapshots.”

Take One

Often, organizations have a difficult time deciding whether someone from inside the organization should be featured in a video or whether they should hire talent. It all depends, Mr. Bearer says.

“Good video crafting doesn’t have to be complicated, but it does take some understanding of how to hone simplicity. Video intimidates people, even seasoned individuals. When they look at the camera, they can freeze. Standing still for a photo is very different than trying to engage with video.”

To the extent that you can help make someone feel comfortable in front of the camera will have a big impact on the quality of the end-product.

“Let them know that the video will be edited, that it’s ok to start and stop, and that through the editing process, they’ll be made to look good,” Mr. Eldin says. That can help them feel less concerned about how they perform at any given moment.

“Also, give yourself time beforehand, like 10 to 15 minutes, to talk and mess up in conversation, so the person becomes desensitized to the process.”

Using two cameras, one from the front and one from the side can enable you to cut back and forth in the editing process and assemble messages that may not have been said in sequence. Mr. Eldin will do multiple takes of the person reciting each sentence, so the full video can be assembled and appear as if they were speaking off-the-cuff.

If you decide to hire talent, rather than use internal employees, make sure the people aren’t models and that they look like your employees.

“You also never want to do a full video shoot using personnel if there’s a risk that they won’t be working there anymore,” cautions Ms. Bradley. This can often be the case for in-store video shoots involving retailers.

Testing, Testing. One. Two. Three.

Once you've rolled out some video segments, how do you know if they're working?

"Start with defining your measurement goal. What results do you want to achieve? It might seem nebulous at first, like increasing customer compliments or seeing a 90% participation rate. But if you know your objective, you can then implement a quiz at the end of the video to test for recall. We typically do measurement every quarter, to see what we're accomplishing. It's just one piece of the formula," Ms. Bradley says.

"You have to be honest with yourself," says Mr. Langford. "People get pride of ownership. You have to be able to say, 'Nobody is watching that.' There may be lots of reasons, but once you see the numbers, you need to be willing to make changes, try a different approach, or get the info out in a longer or shorter format. There are always other strategies to try."

Depending upon the platform you use, you may have access to data analytics, which provide details such as who is viewing your video, when, and for how long. These insights will enable you to understand your employees better and refine your content accordingly.

According to Marketo, when people watch video, they recall roughly **95%** of its message as opposed to only 10% of the information conveyed through text or audio.

And almost **70%** of people would prefer to watch a video explaining a product or a service, rather than just read about it.

(Wyzowl 2016)



Ready to Press Record?

For those who have not yet deployed video, Mr. Langford says, “Just get out there and do something. Find the youngest person in the company and ask them how to do it. If you look around, there are people in every organization who are sharp when it comes to technology. Get them to help you. And don’t worry about the budget, you can build and justify more down the road. You need to start somewhere; no one is doing *less* video. Everyone’s doing more.”

Perhaps more than ever, considering the COVID-19 crisis, expectations regarding production values have relaxed as people adjust to the reality of Zoom video calls.

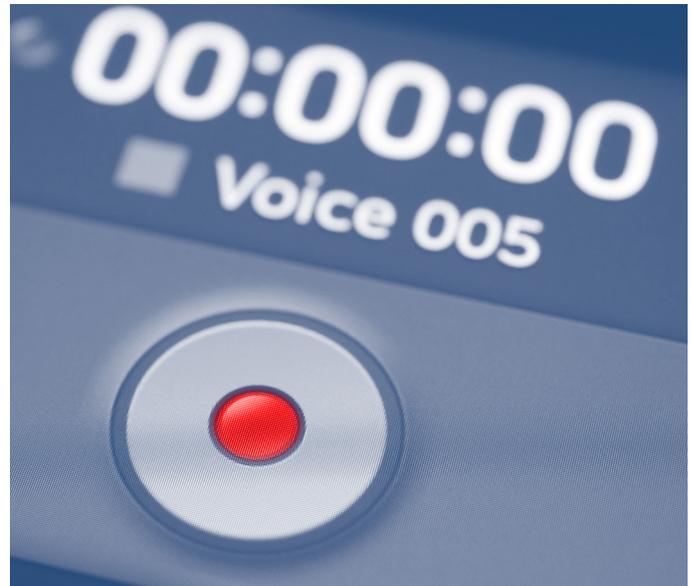
“People will forgive a lot of production value if you get to the point quickly,” says Mr. Bearer. In fact, he’s noticed a trend towards “downhome” productions that feature echoing audio and less than perfect backgrounds.

“They are purposely choosing that approach to make it feel like we’re all in this together. They’re doing it with intent to bring a certain delivery style to the community.”

Mr. Langford suspects that our new normal with more people working remotely, may even increase the need for video communications and provide an easier entry for those who haven’t yet ventured into the arena.

“People are going to be willing to say, let’s try this. It’ll be more acceptable to fail and take a chance in this brave new world. Start with the least expensive option: grab your iPhone, put something together, edit it in iMovie. Maybe it won’t be great, but it’ll be a starting point.”

Then, all your employees can take the next step and press Play.



It is estimated that by 2022, **82%** of the global Internet traffic will come from video streaming and downloads. That’s an **88%** increase in traffic share, up from the 72.3% in 2017.

(Cisco, 2019)

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