

Don't tell me about your products, show me !

Interview with Patrick Janssen, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Ebuco Digital Productions

Some kind of communication evolution, one that is changing the way corporations communicate with their stakeholders, is likely to catch much attention from CEOs and CMOs. It is usually called video on the web, a new manner to give messages to well selected groups by combining the strengths of the movie and the Internet. Surprisingly, most business people have never heard, or given a significant attention, to this exploding and relatively low-cost channel.



Patrick Janssen : 'online video content trully allows for engaging customers with your products and your company'

"Very often, when I am talking with CEOs or marketing directors about how we're producing and distributing branded original content across a network of sites online, most of them ask me the question : why should we use video content ? Strange enough, they admit that traditional communication channels like advertising or web banners do not deliver expected results anymore while the overall cost remains very high. And they are right. Don Tapscott's book "Grown Up Digital" points out a whole generation that is amazingly adept at detecting, filtering, skipping and blocking ad messages all together. Therefore, the old adage "don't tell me, show me," is extremely relevant and this explains why videos are more and more appreciated by companies and customers as well." says Patrick Janssen, Founder and CEO of Ebuco, a Brussels-based digital production company. "Unlike traditional ads, branded content may engage people with good storytelling while showing your product in action in a real-life environment. Rather than telling about the features of your product or service, a video allows you to illustrate them authentically within a particular lifestyle without heavy and aggressive sales pitch".

Where web banner ads simply flash a brief message, rich-media video ads invite to interaction. Well-defined content and 'webisodic' series hold customers' attention for minutes at a time, lure them back for repeat exposure, and communicate much more than the often forgettable "buy me" messaging of a traditional 30-second spot. In today's digital environment, where empowered consumers dictate their media schedule and only flock to brands they can relate to and connect with, offering them quality and entertaining content is an exceptionally way to connect and stick out from the clutter. What's more, the best of traditional web advertising still applies. And in terms of distribution, content can be extremely well targeted to the right eyeballs, significantly reducing waste. Patrick Janssen : "Could you imagine if television networks, instead of shooting a number of shows and programs to an heterogeneous audience and crossing their fingers for big pockets of success, could target each of their programs to the people who want to watch them and when they want to do so ?".

Either an alternative or a complement to traditional advertising

But in all likelihood, the video will not replace traditional TV and press advertising. Instead, it acts as a perfect, low-cost complement. TV-spots are traditionally very expensive to produce and their price for broadcast at peak times is simply not payable for most enterprises. Also, and although TV-spots are nearly the most expensive marketing channel, it's very hard -not to say impossible- to measure their real impact on business. "Instead of producing costly ads for TV or press usage, we could imagine making them much simpler with shorter messages and refer to a website where people can see a short video giving a detailed overview of a product in a real-life situation", continues Patrick Janssen. "Many people cannot imagine how

many different messages a video can bring to the right audience in just 60 or 90 seconds. In addition, customers or prospects can review the video several times, give a particular attention on a specific feature or message, and project themselves as a virtual user of the product. Briefly said, no other channel may create such an interactive dialogue with the customer and such a desire for purchase. And for smaller enterprises, whose limited budgets do not permit do even dream about traditional ads, webvideo offers an extremely powerful communication channel that has proven to be both innovative and efficient”.



Product promotion, talents recruitment, corporate governance, customer experience, internal communication... : the business possibilities of webvideo are large and nearly unlimited.

Ultimate sales conversion rate

Several surveys demonstrate significant increase in product purchases after online shoppers viewed audio/video tours of products. A particular one, realized in 2008 on online shopping behaviors, found a 35% increase in the sales conversion rate among shoppers who viewed the tours versus those who did not. In addition, shoppers viewing the product tours spent more than 2,5 minutes, on average, engaged in viewing detailed product information about each product viewed. Concretely, shoppers may choose to get a product tour by clicking on a button and then received detailed product presentations featuring audio, video and downloadable sales collateral related to a particular product. “No other medium can provide such a sales conversion rate” continues Patrick Janssen. “And unlike banner ads, whose success is often judged by how many clicks a unit got (a metric that has yet to correlate to brand lift), video content can be tracked on a whole new set of much more in-depth metrics. You can see how long people are engaged with content, where precisely they rewind or fast-forward the video, how many times they watch and re-watch content, as well as where and when they pass the content to friends or re-post the content to their own social media sites”.

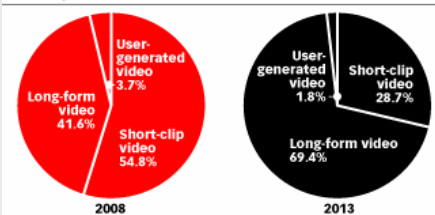
Smaller screens, bigger opportunities ?

To appreciate how far online video has come, consider some contrasts between the 2008 and 2004 elections in the United States. In the 2008 campaign, primary debates were co-sponsored by YouTube, and questions from the public were submitted through the pioneering video-sharing site. In 2004, YouTube did not exist. According to Visible Measures, footage of Sen. Obama’s election night victory speech received 500 unique online placements within 36 hours. This encompassed unique video clips, as opposed to multiple embeds of the same one. Further, videos of the speech were viewed more than 6.8 million times in the first 36 hours, live streams or feeds from broadcast sites other than NBC.com not included !

Briefly said, a huge video market is developing online and analysts foresee that that the US online video audience alone will grow to 190 million people by 2012 - 88% of the local internet user population. And despite some hesitating starts with transactional experiments, online video advertising closely follows the standard TV advertising model. “But it’s much more than just advertising in the usual sense”, reacts Patrick Janssen. “We have already produced many other types of contents relating to recruitment, real estate or

customer experience. A short online video showing a company’s environment, office space and employees testimonials provides a much significant perception of a firm and a clear wish to send a CV compared to a traditional recruitment ad, and this for a similar price. Talent attractiveness rate for recruitment is comparable to sales conversion improvement in online shopping, and this easily explains why it becomes the preferred channel for HR departments to support their recruitment campaigns. In the same way, real estate companies tend to promote their buildings through online visits using short videos. In just 60 seconds, a potential tenant gets a clear view of a building standing, location, environment, space, equipment, infrastructure, etc. No diaporama can provide such an impact. Finally, the biggest potential

US Online Streaming Video Advertising Revenues, by Video Type, 2008 & 2013 (% of total)



Source: The Diffusion Group, "Online TV and the Future of Online Video Advertising: An Excerpt from TDG's New Report," July 2008
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probably resides in marketing departments using more and more webvideos to showcase customer experiences instead of traditional sheets with customer testimonials. Here again, the magical of the video may show a customer using a product or a service in real-life situation while focusing on the emotions created. Compared to traditional reference sheets, it's not second, but hundreds to none".

A well-known case : Nike's Hyperdunk shoe

In support of their Hyperdunk shoe campaign, Nike launched a webvideo featuring a basketball superstar recklessly leaping over a speeding dreamcar. The original and viral placements of the video clip accumulated more than 16 million views in aggregate, while the original one posted by Nike generated for less than 40% of the overall reach. All told, the webvideo campaign attracted over 35,000 comments and the estimated engaged reach of this campaign was a whopping 375,000 hours of total viewing time. For perspective, the original 54 second clip drove over 40 viewing years in aggregate.

Source: Visible Measures, an independent third-party measurement firm for Internet video publishers, advertisers and viral marketers (www.visiblemeasures.com)

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Patrick Janssen is graduated from Institut des Arts de Diffusion and the Catholic University of Leuven (UCL). He is the founder and chief executive officer of Ebuco, a digital production company specializing in the production of content (video, multimedia and sound) broadcast viaa variety of interactive media including desktops, laptops, PDAs, mobile phones, etc.

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