

Orchid Briefing Note

The Video Wall



Imagine an event that meant a great deal to you. It could be a child's birthday, a concert, a wedding or a retirement speech. Close your eyes and relive the moment. Savour that moment a while. Now try to write down in no more than 90 words a description of the scene and give it to someone else to read aloud. Have you really captured the moment? Is your story rich and memorable? If not, you have just proved that you need considerably more than 90 words to paint a picture.

90 words is equivalent to 30 seconds of video (using a rule of thumb developed by television producers). If you were to watch 30 seconds of video of the celebration you described, imagine how powerful, engaging, emotive and *real* that would be.

Adding value with video

Applying video to business communications enables organisations to tap into the emotions of an audience in a way more traditional methods cannot. But for most businesses there is a wall to overcome when considering use of video because they think it's complicated, expensive and requires a high level of technical knowledge. That isn't necessarily true.

You don't need fancy kit or a degree in video production to be able to create professional looking clips. You can buy off-the-shelf equipment from most high street electronics stores which will do the job. By training in-house staff to use the equipment, you can be up and running in a day. We are not speaking about expensive corporate video production but the ability to be flexible and nimble using your own resources and capabilities to produce one to two minute business video clips.

So who is watching?

There are very compelling reasons why you should consider video communications. There are approximately 6.8 billion people living in the world of which 1.7 billion are hooked up to the internet. Over the past ten years the number of people using the web has soared by 380% and is still growing. In Asia alone, more than 730 million people are now online.

Tens of millions of people go online every day *expecting* to see video. In the US 57% of adults watch video online. In Europe more than 420 million people claim to have downloaded video content to their computers. 100 million of those are watching video on the move using smartphones or PDAs. All of the content has to come from somewhere and online journalists and editors have a significant problem: their sites are content hungry but they are resource starved. Most web editorial teams are actively seeking quality news videos to feed their voracious appetites for content.

An interesting, useful video clip delivers more punch per pound than a standard press release and picture can ever achieve. What's more, a video news release (VNR) can be applied across many different platforms including intranet, websites and social media.

Video can go viral in a way that a press release cannot. When Daimler/Chrysler launched the Dodge Ram in 2007, the in-house PR team bought a £700 camera, a tripod and an external microphone and made a walk-around video of the car. They edited it on domestic software and uploaded it to YouTube. Then they sent the link out to press contacts. The campaign generated more than 6,000 views on their site and created nearly 14,000 references to the video on Google.

Video news is on the agenda

The video news release is likely to become the single most important development in B2B, B2C and media communications in the next 24 months. Last year, every national newspaper in the UK, and most regional ones too, put video on their websites. Don't get VNRs confused with corporate video production because they are entirely different both in style and acceptability. Editors – and audiences - want something that is journalistic in flavour and shot *as they would shoot it*. Your communications agency or in-house team should know how to do this. Having the ability to self-produce this material greatly increases your opportunity to use video cost-effectively and regularly.

We are not talking *Avatar* here. The rules are strict: keep it simple and brief; make it informative and useful. Clips should be no longer than 30 seconds to two minutes and should not be laced with clever effects and graphics. Above all add value to what you are trying to say.

If your customers, clients and new business leads matter to you then surely it is better to tell your story in as engaging, informative and emotive way you can. All it needs is some simple kit and a little bit of training. The video wall can be climbed and when you take the first steps, you'll find it is nowhere near as high as you thought. The rewards on the other side are worth it.

To find out more about Orchid Communication's new video services and to see a video version of this article, please visit www.orchid.je.