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Online video is exploding. Any B2B marketer concerned with [marketing ROI](#) and sales enablement needs to know how and when to use it.

Take YouTube, for example. Second only to Google, YouTube has rapidly emerged as an easy-to-use and reliable search tool; it overtook Yahoo as the [second largest search engine](#) in 2008 and is now the fastest-growing media platform in history. In fact, this month the [Volkswagon Darth Vader](#) ad attracted 20% of the record-breaking viewership for the entire SuperBowl XLV in just 36 hours.

Remember how much of a game-changer television ads were to print and radio? Just imagine what happens when online video does the same thing to internet advertising.

The appeal of the play button

Visual learners comprise 65% of the public, and auditory learners make up another 30%, so it's no wonder video is the way people learn best. Conveniently for us B2B marketers, video also conveys more information per minute than any other media platform.

According to a Universal McCann study cited by [Brightcove](#), people find product information and research most compelling when delivered in video format. MarketingSherpa claims that online video is a close second to word-of-mouth communication when it comes to influencing key decisions. No other media channel communicates a deeper, richer message or leaves a more lasting impression than video.

The world, at your 'tech and call'

I believe we are on the cusp of yet another revolution in online video. In recent history, watching online video meant sitting at our desks in a "lean forward" mode.

But today, there is a proliferation of technology that pushes videos to internet-enabled TV's and a mushrooming market of mobile devices. Online video is now available to anyone, anywhere, at any time. Now, we can watch video in line at Starbucks, or surf through videos while leaning back on our couches at home.

Plus, this technology allows users to create their own highly personalized mix of channels - which brings online even more into our lives. For example, I'm a huge fan of the [Flipboard](#) app on the iPad, which converts RSS feeds and Twitter lists into a highly customized and personalized online magazine. Now, when I'm in "relaxation" mode, I find that I am as likely to read my "B2B Marketing" magazine on the Flipboard as I am to read the Economist or my latest book on the Kindle. Imagine what will happen when we have the same ability to create a highly customized and curated channel of online video that we can watch on the go or on our couch? Interested in demand generation best practices and Napa Valley wineries? No problem. One mouse click creates a channel for you - and you may find yourself watching it instead of the latest episode of House.

Such personalization and accessibility are especially important to B2B marketers who know that buyers are extremely adept at filtering out unwanted marketing messages. A marketer may not be able to reach a prospect through e-mail or phone, but once a video gets into a customized feed that reflects the prospect's exact personal interests, the video will stimulate action.

How video engages prospects throughout the buying cycle

Video has become a [demand generation](#) strategy your business cannot afford to ignore, and effective B2B marketers match video content to reflect the interest levels of their audience. Here are my recommendations:

Early Stage: Generate high interest by sharing viral videos. Repurpose webinars and establish [thought leadership](#)

. Position yourself as the go-to source for stimulating research, insight and interpretation of the latest news and trends.

Mid Stage: Begin to concentrate more exclusively on your brand, and evangelize your value propositions with basic company introductions, product demo overviews and short customer testimonials. Convert casual interest into product curiosity to narrow your funnel and qualify your leads.

Late Stage: Once you've built trust, offer detailed case studies and longer videos, begin to capture vital customer information.

Top 10 online video promotion strategies

Here are my top 10 recommendations to promote your online videos.

1. *Search optimize your video with text summary.* Today, your SEO strategy for YouTube is as important as your Google strategy. Create a text summary, and use compelling copy and keywords to summarize your subject matter and main points, and include your URL. Not only have you created a cheat sheet for those unable to watch the clip; you've enabled search engines to better locate and categorize your videos.

2. *Replace static ads with viral pay-per-click (PPC) displays.* There was never a [happier marriage in outbound marketing](#) than that between online advertising and rich media. Whereas traditional online advertising conveys a one-dimensional brand message, video-based advertising captivates viewers by fusing entertainment with information about your business. Embed video "teasers" into banner ads across the Web to redirect engaged prospects to your homepage and correlating case studies, customer testimonials, brand overviews, etc.

3. *Capture sales leads with longer form video.* Someone who is willing to watch a 10-minute product demo is more likely to provide his contact information. Place landing pages before offering your in-depth videos. You may also take things to the next level with emerging interactive video technologies such as [Veepl eTV](#) .

4. *Bolster conversion with YouTube promotion and Call-To-Action overlays.* [YouTube](#)

[promoted videos](#)

let you expand your marketing funnel with a simple video upload and specification of preferred keywords, and Call-To-Action overlays (semi-transparent ads that pop up during your video) route potential qualified leads back to your site. Either way, you'll improve your marketing ROI because you pay only when people click your video, not when they see your promotion.

5. *Integrate video into your [email marketing](#)* . Effective lead nurturing is all about keeping prospective buyers emotionally loyal to you. To develop rapport with your sales leads, use online video to deliver information directly to their inboxes that is relevant to who they are and where they are in the buying process. Some statistics show email conversion rates

[increase up to 300%](#)

when video is included.

6. *Increase downloads of marketing collateral with a video-enabled landing page*. Landing pages include speaker photos and a topic summary, so why not employ a high-quality video instead, as we did to promote our webinar:

[The Secret Sauce To Sales And Marketing Alignment](#).

Often, you can increase your

[call-to-action response](#)

by as much as 46%.

7. *Leverage social media*. Promote your online videos across all marketing channels - on social media sites, your blog, as well as personal and corporate profiles. To grow your online community, you need to market your videos as aggressively as any other new content.

8. *Feature videos on your website*. Salesforce.com does a great job of creating its own [video network](#)

, but why not take it even further and organize your site into subject-specific channels? Also, consider how to promote videos throughout the site and on the home page.

9. It's all about control... and a consistent brand. Remember that your videos represent the heart and soul of your company. Anyone can embed your clips anywhere on the web, so cover your bases with short intros and outros on either end of your segments. This way, your videos will enhance your brand and link to your site no matter where they appear.

10. Create sales videos to engage and qualify buyers. The use of video should not be limited to marketers. For example, IBM sales managers send out a short personalized video introduction a few days before they meet a prospect for the first time. This enhances the quality of the relationship prior to the visit and personalizes the buying experience. After the call, the sales manager sends a brief video that thanks the prospect for his time and provides a summary of action steps.

Conclusion

Throughout your online video outreach, don't forget prospects are listening even if you don't have their contact information. This is the nature of [seed nurturing](#) . If done poorly, you'll squander potential profits and line the pockets of your more attentive competitors. Or, you'll create a continuous stream of highly qualified leads.

Here is the final fact: Salesforce's YouTube videos churn out as many leads per day as [46 hyper efficient sales reps](#) . What's not to like about that?

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