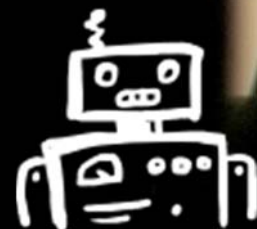




THE ROLE OF VIDEO IN ARTS MARKETING.

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FOR YEARS, THE IDEA OF USING VIDEO FOR ARTS PROMOTION WAS A DREAM; THE KIND OF THING ONLY THE MOST MASSIVE ARTS ORGANIZATIONS COULD EVEN THINK OF IMPLEMENTING. TODAY, THAT'S NOT THE CASE.

Advancement in DSLR cameras has made high definition video content accessible and affordable to shoot. Editing can now be done quickly from a personal computer, and advanced animations and transitions are only a knowledge barrier away for most arts organizations.

Perhaps the most significant change to arts organizations and the utilization of video content has come from the distribution of that content. Television no longer represents the primary medium for the majority of video consumption. Today, over 500 million hours of video are watched every day on YouTube, and 85% of the US internet audience watches videos online. We've gone from prohibitive costs of commercial television to placing video content directly in the hands of our patrons.

The retail world has already seen what the power of video content can do to online sales conversions. When a video was added to a product page, retailers saw an 88% increase in conversions.

Video content allows arts organizations to showcase their performances and art in an accessible way, and delivers the feeling of the experience to the patron.

So, how do you get started in video content if you're an arts organization? Before you grab a camera, the first step has to be to consider how video can be worked into your existing marketing efforts and what resources can you apply to it. Don't panic. The idea of allocating resources to this can be frightening to many organizations, but the reality is that video content is affordable and accessible on nearly any budget. Before you buy another print ad or a postcard, you should think about whether you could reach more people with a video for the same cost.

Your old marketing budget allocation may have been to put 100% behind a traditional media buy, but instead, consider taking that budget and splitting it into sections to create the content, promote the content and buy media.

Let's break that down. The first step is to create the content. This is where we need spend some time figuring out how this would fit into our marketing plan. Let's say we are promoting a musical around the holidays. Our marketing plan calls for a creative campaign that evokes feelings of bringing your family together and spending time together at the holidays. This is something we can convey effectively with a video. We'll plan to create a video that features a family coming together in the lobby before the show. In this way, we don't even need to show anything from the stage (avoiding potential costs associated with that); our focus here is on the experience. We'll need to story-board this, consider length, and procure equipment either through purchase or rental. Then we'll cast the promo and film it.

After editing and adding an emotive music choice as a backing track, we'll have a powerful piece of content ready for distribution. BUT WAIT! I hear you saying, "is your first step, just *make a video?*" Certainly, there are challenges and a skill set required for the creation of a video. The good news is there a lot of resources for that. You can absolutely hire a freelance videographer. You can bring in a film student or intern looking to create pieces to begin her portfolio. Or you can create one yourself. Online training is available and comprehensive. Lessons can be found on sites like Lynda.com that will have you up and running with video in under a week.

The next step is the promotion of that video. How are you going to distribute it? First, put the video on your website. You'll want to put the video in a position that is most relevant, but also maximizes the views. Consider whether it makes more sense on the homepage, or the product page. Next, look at your social media platforms and consider length.

Facebook videos have no length restrictions, but frequently auto-play and without audio. Ideally, your video should have a strong set of images at the beginning that grabs the viewers' attention and does not require sound. If your video is less than 140 seconds, you can place it directly in a Tweet. If you have a version of 30 seconds, you can post it to Instagram. YouTube is the second largest search engine on the web, so get your video online there and consider keywords in your title and description to appear in searches.

Emails with the promise of video content show a larger open rate, so add a static graphic with a play button that links to your video (some email providers can play videos within the email, so check if yours can do that). Your video has life outside your website, and each of these networks add to the reach of your content, name, and brand.

Finally, let's look into the third step: buying media. Take whatever you have left in the budget for this project and consider where you want to spend to drive views of your video. Promotion on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram is a great way to find specific targets and deliver the content at the same time. Pre-roll YouTube ads can cast a wide net, and you can even select specific websites, apps, or video to run your ad on. The best part of the ad buy for your video through digital channels is the ability to set a budget as large or as small as you want.

For the cost of a postcard that yields a very small return on your investment, a piece of video content can be produced and distributed to a huge audience.

-Ryan Mayer