

8 things your video agency should do for you

Introduction

If you're already commissioning video you're probably well aware of the emerging trend towards 'Strategic Video Agencies'.

What you might not be aware of is the important part such an agency can play in your overall marketing strategy, making sure your videos get seen — and get results.

So how do you tell the good ones from the not so good? Here's 8 things a good Strategic Video Agency should do for you...

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Help you understand your audience

You're unlikely to talk to your toddler about interest rates, and you'll get a blank stare from your grandmother if you ask her about Grime. Audience is the starting point for any form of communication, and in the hyper-crowded world of 'marketing messages' the more clearly you can tailor your message to the right people the greater the chance they'll hear what you're saying.

A good Strategic Video Agency will conduct audience research, focus groups, surveys — finding out what your audience likes and dislikes, what they do (or avoid doing), and how best to reach them. Even a basic survey can reveal an awful lot about the people you're targeting, and for a tiny investment can help you avoid very costly mistakes in your approach to video.

Research helps you discover your audience's likes and dislikes, and how best to reach them.





Immerse themselves in your brand

Your agency should know your brand inside out. They should know its look, feel, tone of voice, culture, and they should have a deep understanding of your products and services.

This also involves having a sneaky sideways look at your competitors, understanding what they're up to and how you might either emulate it or differentiate yourself.

Your video agency should therefore become an extension of your team, with account management to support your activities, and creatives who can operate within the right context to deliver your messages in the right way.

Of course, this can be more difficult to achieve on a single project, so it's far preferable — and more cost effective — to work with your agency on a retainer or ongoing basis.

Your agency should know your brand inside and out, and become an extension of your team.





Develop your video strategy

The audience research and brand immersion are all leading up to this one. Your video agency should help you develop your strategy. The days of 'spray and pray' marketing are over, and you should be producing video that delivers the right messages, to the right people, on the right day, on the right device... you get the idea.

Once you understand your audience and have made some great content (for THEM), it's the strategy that helps target that content. That might mean appropriate tagging to give your video the best organic opportunities, or it might mean a more proactive approach; for example, Google Adwords provides an immediate, targeted audience for your content at reasonable cost.

A clearly defined video strategy includes KPIs and allows you to measure progress very easily; and because video is such a malleable medium (unlike the cupboard full of last year's useless brochures), you can test, measure, develop, and improve all the time.

Never assume people will find and watch your video. It's much tougher than you think, and a good agency will be honest about that.

Never assume people will find and watch your video.





Create clever content

Your video agency should create 'clever content' for you. It is perhaps obvious that you don't want 'stupid content', but 'clever content' can be defined as that which meets all of the criteria you have set out in your strategy and research, and cleverly finds — and engages — your audience.

It may be that what your brand requires is a very traditional 'corporate video' — but if that's the case it should be an amazing one that YOUR audience will love to watch. Clever might also mean 'innovative', 'edgy', 'fun', 'shocking' — it is simply a way to describe content that meets the needs of brand and audience and delivers maximum engagement and results.

And it's not just the content — the delivery methods and format also need to be 'clever', and your agency should be across all of the emerging technologies.

Clever content finds — and engages — your audience.





Challenge you

There is an inherent power relationship with your video agency in which you control the purse strings and they like to win your continued business. But as far as is possible, both parties should aim to move beyond that, and a good agency should challenge you if they think you are making a mistake.

There is a tendency in many organisations to do things as they've always been done, keep the higher-ups happy and not rock the boat too much. But the point of audience research, brand immersion and an agreed strategy is that wiggle room is reduced, and if your agency thinks you're about to make a blunder then it's their duty to tell you.

Of course, this becomes far easier if you have allowed them to become an 'extension of your team', in which case you will reap the benefits of an open and honest relationship in which your agency feels it can speak up.

Have an open and honest relationship with your agency.





Innovate

Innovation is the key to standing out in your crowded market place. Choose an agency that has a good grasp of available — and emerging — technologies so that your videos can reach your audience in new and exciting ways.

Innovation can also be applied in the area of craft skills, so that your videos are highly creative, leading-edge pieces of communication that stand out and really ‘wow’ the audience.

And don’t forget measurement of results, data capture, and audience monitoring; the technologies around these areas are very powerful and allow you to further hone your activity to get better and better results.

Innovation is key at every stage of the process.





Leverage their experience and mitigate risk

In business, it's often better to learn by somebody else's mistakes than your own. An agency should bring with them a wealth of experience in dealing with organisations either similar to your own, or at least with similar challenges. What you are then buying into is a wealth of data acquired over many campaigns, that allow your agency to advise you on the best approaches and, perhaps most importantly, what to avoid.

Video can be a big investment, and knowing your agency has 'been there, done that' many times before means less risk of your project falling flat on its face. Even if you do want to try something new, an experienced video agency will mitigate the risk attached to being ahead of the curve.

Talk to your agency about results. What have they achieved before, and what can you expect from your projects? How are they going to limit risk and give your videos the best chance of success? Ultimately, how will their experience make your content stand out from the thousands of hours of video uploaded every day?

Talk to your agency about results.





Get results

Ultimately, this is the only thing that really matters. Video is such a powerful medium, not least because the technological frameworks in which it is delivered nowadays allow us to measure 'results' in granular detail.

And what are 'results'? It depends on your business, and it also depends on the KPIs and objectives that you outlined in your video strategy, but it could be an increase in sales, brand awareness, employee engagement, telephone enquiries, products sold, even lives saved.

The key point is that any strategic video agency worthy of the name will have 'results' at the front and centre of the work they do for you. Making videos and sending them out into the wild with fingers crossed is yesterday's news — we can now measure return on investment quite accurately, and a good agency should be able to prove to you that your investment in video is paying off.

The most expensive video is the one that nobody watches.



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