

Showstopping Video

A strategic approach

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Introduction

Occasionally, a requirement comes along to create a video on a much grander scale than the rest of your output; you may be looking to raise the profile of your brand, launching a new product or service, or celebrating a company-wide milestone such as a key anniversary, acquisition or partnership. Perhaps you're already familiar with producing UGC video, or even working with agencies to create your regular video content, but when the time comes to create a showstopper, a new set of rules come into play if you are to see a return on your (larger) investment.

This eBook has been created to help you navigate the development and creation of a **showstopping** video, and covers key aspects of the process from the initial idea, through planning and execution, the all-important distribution strategy, and culminating in an evaluation phase to accurately **measure** success at the end of your campaign.

It may be that you are already applying many of these rules within your existing video content strategy, but if you're currently missing even a single link in the chain you should be able to benefit from the approaches outlined here.

Finally, we cover a recent case study for Segro, who worked with Big Button using these strategic tools to turn an enormous, empty warehouse into more than a million video hits and a mountain of great PR.

This eBook has been created to help you navigate the development and creation of a showstopping video.





Brief

You have a requirement for which video seems like the solution, and you may already have the seeds of an initial idea. That idea could be anything from ‘I would like 100,000 more potential customers to really understand what we do’ to ‘we need to increase sales in XYZ territory’. You are embarking on a process that will help you focus your objectives and enable you to align the specific needs and preferences of your audience with the messages you need to deliver. To do this, you need to involve specialists, and to do that, you need to organise your initial thoughts into a brief that can be shared.

Some key things to consider when preparing your brief:

- Take your time, involve internal and external stakeholders, and don't be afraid of them! It's best to find out what they think now rather than later. Their input may send you in a different direction than expected, but that might deliver a better outcome. Research can really help create content that resonates with the audience.
- Try to avoid focusing on creative ideas at this stage, but instead concentrate on making sure that your objectives are clear. A video that is widely viewed but which doesn't convey your message effectively to the right audience can't really be considered a success.
- Consider the results you are hoping for. How will you will evaluate the video's success, and how will this be measured?
- Budget appropriately. This will influence the project considerably, and you may end up paying more in the long run if you don't do it properly first time.

The screenshot shows a 'video briefing' form from Big Button. It includes fields for 'YOUR NAME', 'DEPARTMENT', 'PHONE NUMBER', and 'EMAIL'. Below these are three larger text areas: 'PROJECT SYNOPSIS', 'AUDIENCE' (with a sub-note: 'e.g. internal, external, sales, marketing, prospects, senior specific etc'), and 'SMART OBJECTIVES' (with a sub-note: 'e.g. new awareness, generate specific response, increase sales, generate leads'). The Big Button logo and website URL 'www.bigbutton.tv' are in the top right corner.

Big Button's briefing sheet can be downloaded above



- Look beyond your sector for examples of best practice. Don't assume B2B can't be exciting! Your audience will enjoy watching TV, movies, or other types of filmed entertainment as much as anyone else, so your content doesn't have to stay within the confines of typical 'corporate' video.
- Don't assume value comes from the duration of the film or the number of messages you've managed to include — concentrate on the overall objective.
- Keep key messages to a minimum. The most successful videos concentrate on an emotive response rather than trying to communicate point after point. Clever content that creates an emotional reaction but at the same time communicates key messages implicitly is what really works.

Objectives might include:

- Increase in site visitors
- Increase in dwell time
- Decrease in returns
- Increase in conversions

Don't assume value comes from the duration of the film or the number of messages you've managed to include.





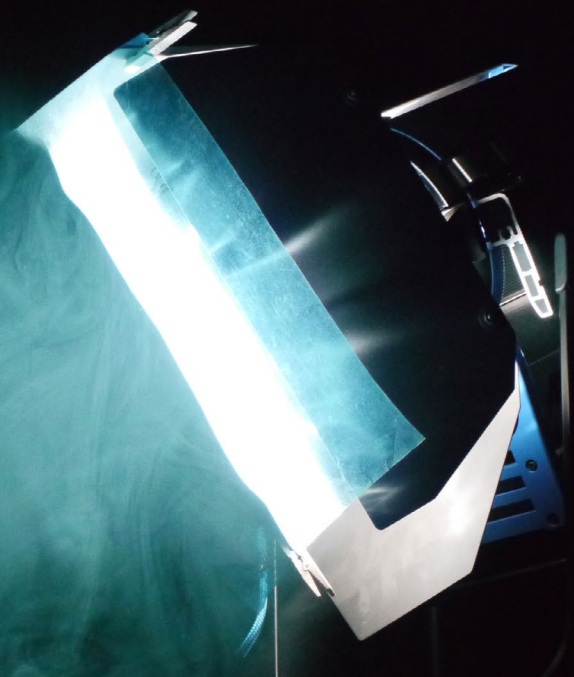
Pre-production

The pre-production phase is where identifying your audience, your key messages, any initial creative ideas and your overall business objectives for the project all come together to give the video clear creative and strategic direction.

- Allow time to plan properly. Rushing at this stage could ruin a great concept.
- Your chosen video agency should do all of the heavy lifting and add value throughout the process; rely on them to fill the gaps in your own ideas and thinking, and acknowledge their expertise. The aim is to remove 'gut feeling' from the process as far as possible, and an agency with good research credentials and previous experience are crucial.
- Consider key influencers in your sector such as journalists and bloggers. What content do they want? Get them involved as key stakeholders from an early stage to ensure favourable coverage and wider sharing to your target audience.
- We are talking about a **showstopper**, so it almost certainly isn't an interview with the CEO. TAKE RISKS. While the definition of risk-taking differs between sectors, you do need to be brave if you want to create content that stands out.
- BUT — don't forget your key messages and objectives. As creative ideas develop, it can be tempting to get immersed in the 'fun' stuff and forget why you're making the video at all.

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Execution

This is the point at which your agency should take the lead. You will be involved, of course, but it's time for the experts to take the pressure off you and bring the agreed vision to life. Some key points to consider at the execution stage:

- Your agency should be leading the way, but involving you throughout the process.
- There should be some flexibility to allow for last-minute changes. Showstopping ideas tend to throw up some surprises — and opportunities — along the way.
- It's advisable to have a contingency, both in terms of budget and time. Big ideas tend to bring bigger challenges; your video agency should be expert in mitigating and solving problems, but even with the best planning these challenges can't all be identified in advance.
- The devil is in the detail, and savvy audiences will notice if you cut corners. It doesn't always mean high production values and expense, but it does mean doing justice to your creative ideas.
- Hire an agency and/or a director who will truly understand your overall business and the objectives of the project. Key people involved with the production need to get what you are trying to achieve and understand the audience and distribution strategies. That way, last minute changes can be accommodated on set if necessary without the fear of messages being diluted or confused. The same applies to the dynamic management of the video campaign on social channels, where small corrections can be made to maximise reach and impact.
- Developing peripheral content at the same time can deliver great value. Behind-the-scenes videos and photos are very inexpensive as add-ons to the main project, but can really help amplify campaign impact.

Big ideas tend to bring bigger challenges; your video agency should be expert in mitigating and solving problems.





Distribution

In the excitement of producing an ambitious creative idea, it's possible — and in fact, quite common — to neglect strategies for distribution of the video, or to allow the distribution plan to become a secondary consideration. Of course, this must be avoided at all costs; the overall objective is to reach your audience, and it's rare that creativity alone will achieve that. And as far as return on investment goes, the old saying really nails it: The most expensive video is the one that nobody watches.

- Use research at the beginning of the process to understand where your audience can be found, and how they consume content.
- Be optimistic about an organic spread of your video, but remember that paid for distribution is crucial for high-profile projects.
- Limit your video posting activity to a limited number of sources, in order to keep the view count higher on each one. This will help your video attract even more views, and increase the chance of a 'runaway'.
- Use your PR team/agency's expertise and networks to help with distribution.
- Contact the trade press, as they will be excited by showstopping content that they can share with your peers. At Big Button, a single press article drove over 200K views of one of our films in under 2 hours.
- Think laterally: what is the easiest way to reach my audience? Where do they coalesce online? Working with journalists, bloggers and influencers can really give your video a head start.

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Measurement

The aim of your project is 'success', and with the help of your video agency you should have clearly defined what 'success' was going to look like at the start of the process. In order to evaluate that, it's necessary to define some metrics that can be measured.

- Don't fall into the common trap of only measuring 'views', as this can sometimes just be a 'vanity' metric; a million views of your video may be impressive, but if you only operate in Europe and the viewers are all in China you have not succeeded...
- So consider who is watching, where they are located, how they have interacted with the video, what actions they have taken after watching it... there are a number of sophisticated ways to measure the success of a video. Using more advanced analytics such as audience retention will help you get a better idea of whether your content is engaging the people you targeted.
- Think about clever ways to measure, such as issuing voucher codes or collecting viewer data on landing pages. Many video platforms allow for sophisticated data capture within the video itself.
- Finally — be cautious when using the term 'viral'. It can mean different things to different people, and might mean you lose sight of your objectives (you may be celebrating 1 million views, but did you sell any more widgets?). 'Viral' really means the organic spread of content, with people passing it to each other without your intervention; that **might** indicate success, but only if the sharing is happening within your target audience.

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Results

This is what you came for. The weeks and months spent planning and executing your showstopper have all led to this point, and it's time to see how we all did. Very often, your measurement throughout the campaign will have allowed you to make small course corrections, or even re-edits, to improve the video's performance throughout its initial lifetime. But eventually, there comes a reckoning...

- Firstly, what were the objectives, and how did you define 'success' at the start of the process? Any results should be evaluated relative to those initial objectives. A single view of your video could mean success, if your objective has been achieved e.g. get the buyer at XYZ Ltd to watch and engage. And, as mentioned above, a million (useless) views may be a failure, no matter how good it makes you feel.
- Secondary considerations might include benchmarking the video's performance against your other content to see how it compares to one of your more typical videos. Also, how did it perform compared to the output of your competitors?
- Showstopping videos perform very well in awards ceremonies, particularly if they are innovative, creative and have achieved impressive results. Awards help you generate even more PR and traffic for your content.
- Be patient, it can take a little while for your content to gather momentum and attract its audience. You can continue to adjust your approach — it's an iterative process where measuring, evaluating and tweaking should continue across the life of the campaign.
- Remember to take what you learn and apply it to your next project.

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SEGRO Case Study

Contraption

FTSE100 B2B property brand SEGRO is a leading owner and developer of modern warehousing and light industrial property in the UK and Europe. 2020 is their centenary, and a year of planned celebratory activities. The company had spent a lot of time speaking with agencies about a suitably special film to help with the celebrations, but couldn't find a concept that captured their purpose and sufficiently demonstrated the depth and breadth of their customer base.

After an initial meeting to discuss the company's objectives, Big Button's award-winning creative team spent time developing something extraordinary. They pitched **Contraption**. It was immediately apparent that the idea was the perfect vehicle to launch on SEGRO's centenary, and that it would meet the primary aim of becoming the most recognised, high-profile video in the property marketing sector.

The video takes the form of a Rube Goldberg machine on a grand scale, and was filmed in a single shot (after 22 takes). By filming in a SEGRO property, **Contraption** literally demonstrates the company's tagline, that they 'create the space that enables extraordinary things to happen'. The nature of Rube Goldberg machines is that one thing impacts on another, and **Contraption** represents SEGRO's progress through its 100-year history. At the same time, by using customer products exclusively as part of the machine, the video highlights the company's huge range of prestigious clients.

Built and shot in three-weeks in a SEGRO warehouse in Rainham, Essex, the final contraption was a breathtakingly intricate machine. It included an aeroplane seat, Brompton bicycles, sheets from the Queen's dry cleaners, Thunderbird 2, 100 lemons and a two-tonne concrete drainpipe — to name just a few. In the end, it took 22 excruciating attempts over four days to get one non-stop take where everything worked perfectly.



Video testimonial from SEGRO



SEGRO 'Behind the Scenes' video



The video launched on 19th May on SEGRO's website and social channels. The company leveraged paid, earned and owned media; it was seeded organically, followed by a short, campaign on Twitter and also Facebook — a new social channel for SEGRO.

Within just four days, **Contraption** became the first property sector viral video, with over 500,000 views across all social channels. The numbers continued to grow and have since surpassed 1,000,000 views thanks to social sharing.

Big Button and SEGRO set out to create something never seen before in the property sector: a distinctive concept that entertained as much as it informed. Momentum hasn't stopped — **Contraption** generated extensive positive press coverage and acclaim in the industry. It has been entered into a range of reputable B2B marketing and prestigious film awards.

Very few B2B property brands could deliver a campaign with the level of creative thinking and ingenuity that SEGRO managed. They kept an open mind throughout the process, never settling for second best and trusting Big Button to create something that has become a fitting tribute to a prestigious company with a proud heritage.

Nick Hughes, Director of Marketing and Communications at SEGRO, said: "It's been great working with Big Button. Having the clarity and conviction to go from concept all the way to creation — and not deviating from it — to produce something so special is an impressive achievement. It was an ambitious idea and there were tensions and pressures on all of us throughout the process to deliver, but it was a really good relationship."

Feedback from the target audience

"Brilliantly planned and executed."

"Rube Goldberg would be proud. Great creative ambition, great film."

"Very impressive. Bringing Honda's 'The Cog' up to date!"

"Terrific video. Great concept, beautiful execution."

"A great example of how making an effort in property marketing can make such a difference."



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