

DIGITAL BOOST

power up your business

VIDEO FOR BUSINESS GUIDE



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

An increasing number of businesses are turning to video content as a way to connect with their social audience, increase engagement and convey their message. In this DigitalBoost guide, we take a look into why this trend is taking off and what benefits it may lend your business.

With the online audience spending increasing amounts of time online and on social platforms, now is a great time to consider whether video content is right for your brand. By the end of this guide, you should have a better understanding of the medium and formed some ideas about how you can make it work hard for your business.

Using video doesn't have to be a big step. Introducing brand videos into your social media strategy and your online offering can be done gradually but offer immediate benefits to your business. This guide aims to provide you with a better understanding of the medium and its various uses.

We take a closer look at the requirements and advantages of using social platforms to distribute your video, offer optimisation tips and raise some important points to consider before you get started. We also bust the myth that video is not an accessible format, and offer guidance on how to tap into the trend with minimal budget and expertise.

From frequently asked questions to video content suggestions, we hope that this guide will give you a comprehensive overview of how to get started and thrive in this medium.

WHY SHOULD I BE USING VIDEO CONTENT FOR MY BUSINESS?

User behaviour indicates that more and more people are watching videos as a way of consuming content about everything from information and news, to trends and products. As a result, 63% of businesses have added video content to their social strategy.

Algorithms have been adjusted on many social networks, primarily Twitter and Facebook, in order to increase the organic reach of video content. If your website contains a video, the likelihood of appearing on the first page of Google results increases by 53 times.

This means more of your existing audience will be shown your videos in their feeds, with a high potential of reaching new users. Videos are 10 times more likely to be viewed, shared and engaged with than photos or plain text posts are.

Videos allow you to tell a story and connect more deeply with your audience. Allowing your audience to see behind the scenes and speaking directly to them will resonate more than a written post. Let them meet the founder or the employees and join you on your business journey. What's more, 83% of businesses questioned in a recent survey stated that videos produce a good return on investment.

ARE VIDEOS GOOD FOR SOCIAL

Videos don't have to be pre-recorded either, with platforms now allowing users to live stream at the touch of a button. With live videos, there is a strong likelihood all of your followers will receive a push notification to encourage them to watch - on Instagram, this is a given, and Twitter and Facebook this is also very likely.

Compare this to how many users organically see a post with a photo or just text, and it soon becomes clear that social platforms are favouring video content more than any other type.

WHAT PLATFORMS ARE BEST FOR SHARING VIDEOS?

Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter are all great platforms to share videos, as users are likely to be on these platforms regularly and often scrolling down until something catches their interest. The users are accustomed to seeing videos here, as part of a growing trend of video posting. What's more, videos added natively to Facebook and Twitter are more likely to be favoured by the algorithms and achieve higher results, and often autoplay as users look through their news feeds.

It is a myth that your video needs to be a sophisticated and professional production. Videos shot on smartphones makes your brand appear real and relatable, and this format is great for quick updates. For social platforms in particular, videos don't have to be professionally executed. If your video is for YouTube or your website however, quality is important to the viewing experience.

YouTube is the world's 2nd largest search engine, after Google. It records an average of 30 million viewers per day! Establishing a YouTube presence is therefore key to finding a new audience. When uploaded to YouTube, you can then embed and share the video into social posts and on your website. This collates the number of views into one place, helping you to keep track of its effectiveness.

WHAT ARE LIVE VIDEOS?

Instagram and Facebook now have 'live video' and 'stories' features - following on from Snapchat's signature temporary video posting format. This means you can spontaneously live stream an event or interview, while the latter allows you to post short updates in video or image form. The stories expire after 24hrs while the stream can't always be viewed retroactively, so your content will only be temporarily available. However, Instagram allows users to save stories for posting at a later date, and Facebook live streams will subsequently appear on your page as a post upon completion.

WHO'S YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE?

Snapchat users are made up of a typically younger audience, starting with pre-teens. If this is your target audience, this platform could be for you. Videos on this platform don't need to be professionally executed. Short snippets filmed on mobile are of the norm on this platform. Again, 24hrs is the length of time your update will remain viewable.

The typical user age range for each of these platforms varies - it's worth asking yourself who your target audience is, and using the channel that this demographic is most likely to use. Searching for up to date demographics for each platform may be useful to you.

Again, your page's audience may differ to what the platform say is their typical demographic. Facebook for example can tell you in the insight section of the page who your audience is made up of. Ask yourself what this audience might be more receptive towards; younger audiences might want shorter, entertaining content, while older audiences may be willing to watch videos for longer. Mapping this out will help you when making decisions about the content that is right for your business. In turn, if content is well targeted, users are more likely to engage with it.

WHAT LENGTH OF VIDEO CAN YOU HAVE FOR EACH PLATFORM?

As the online community's attention span shrinks, ask yourself how short you can make your video without cutting out essential information. Brevity is really important and if the message can be communicated in a concise manner, the higher the likelihood that users will view it in its entirety.

1 minute is the limited video length for Twitter and Instagram. YouTube and Facebook videos can be as long as you want - but remember, many people will drop off before the video is even 10 seconds in. 2 minutes should be long enough to get any message across.

Instead of posting one long video, why not break it down into shorter clips and spread it over a series of posts? This way you'll get more value out of the video too, meaning one piece can be used for content over many posts rather than just one. For example, if your video features responses to FAQs, why not break it down into one question & response per video? Organising by topic is another good way to segment the message and keep your videos short.

CHAPTER 2

VIDEO OBJECTIVES

WHY ARE YOU MAKING THE VIDEO?

Videos could be about a product, service, event or announcement. It could simply show how your product or service works or take viewers behind the scenes into the production process. You could choose to showcase yourself, your staff, your premises, your product or your service.

- Popular styles of video include:
- How to guides
- Interviews
- Behind the scenes
- Business showcases
- 'A day in the life of'
- Product explanations
- FAQs

WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE OF THE VIDEO?

Next, ask yourself what you want to achieve with the video.

- Do you want to demystify what your company does?
- Answer a frequently asked question?
- Attract new audiences by showcasing a product?
- Give viewers a chance to see behind the scenes of how a product is manufactured?
- To mark an event; showing off your new Christmas decorations, reacting to winning an award, or on the anniversary of your business?

All of these examples would give you a chance to create content around key dates or milestones. What's more, studies show that 74% of users who viewed a video explaining a product then went on to purchase it.

WHAT TYPE OF CONTENT WILL IT CONTAIN?

Your video could contain several different types of content. For example, it could include a face-to-face interview, photos in a slideshow or overlaid text with subtitles or prices.

Your content could aim to be informative, inspirational, topical, practical and helpful, or even entertaining. Ask yourself which of these purposes best matches the tone of voice and nature of your business. For example, if you are in the trade sector, issuing content which is practical and could help your customers to feel more confident in your services.

tone of voice

Your video should adhere to the tone of voice that you use across your social channels as a business. The level of formality should reflect your business' purpose; do you want to be chatty and open with your customers? Or seem professional and credible?

By taking this into account, you'll also ensure that the video content you produce matches the expectations and needs of your audience.

SEO BOOSTING CONTENT

This refers to content that will boost your business's position in search engine results - SEO, or Search Engine Optimisation, is an important consideration for any business wishing to find new audiences.

YouTube videos often rank high in Google's search results for queries relating to reviews or 'how-to'. In answering a common question in your video, for example, 'how do you change a tyre?' you could be gaining credibility for your business and reaching a higher audience. This might not suit every type of business however.

First, Google a few search terms which relate to your business and discover what type of content you could be producing to meet demand.

Looking at what type of content works well for your competitors or industry leaders is also a great starting point when considering what your video should focus on.

WHAT VALUE WILL THIS VIDEO ADD TO YOUR BUSINESS, OR TO YOUR CUSTOMER'S EXPERIENCE?

If you can answer a frequent customer query (i.e. how do I order online? How do I set up the product?) and cut out a step in the process, that's a great way to streamline the customer experience and have a customer's question answered before they have to get in touch for an answer.

If you own a cafe or shop, a look inside will show potential new customers what the experience inside is like. Taking the risk factor away for customers is a huge motivator, it could take away any doubts they may have about your product or service, and may result in them becoming more likely to become a customer.

Customer testimonials reinforce your business' credibility - a video interview with a customer describing their experience of your service or product will help other customers to trust you.

Another example would be if you perform a professional service, such as tailoring, car repairs or DIY. A video would be a great way to showcase your skills or craftsmanship - a timelapse of a project or job would show users how transformative your service can be.

Handmade products such as jewellery or crafts require a lot of effort and skill - why not show this process to your customers so that they come to realise the value in your product and the effort involved in making it? For small to medium enterprises, showing the behind-the-scenes of your process and service will enhance your business' story.

CHAPTER 3

PLANNING YOUR VIDEO

HOW TO GET STARTED - WHAT YOU WILL NEED

Be prepared! Write a script, do a walkthrough and make sure your shots are planned. By being prepared, you'll get the best out of your video and have a chance to avoid any problems before they happen!

A phone can be all you need to get started. If you want a longer, more in-depth video though you'll need both equipment and editing software. Apple still offer free software such as **iMovie**, which can help you to cut and edit a good quality video. Alternatively, you may have to subscribe to a plan from **Adobe Creative Cloud** to get software such as **Premiere Pro**. **Filmora** is one of the best low cost alternatives online today, which works on both PC's and Mac's.

If you don't want to edit your videos, spontaneous short video can work well for platforms such as Snapchat and Instagram Stories, taking your followers behind the scenes and showing them typical day-to-day activities. Set up for this is very minimal and the video can be conceived in seconds!

WHERE ARE YOU GOING TO TAKE THE VIDEO?

Do you want to film within a studio setting? This is an option, but your video may be more beneficial to your business if you can showcase your premises or services in the process. Lighting and setting are crucial. You want to film within a well lit (preferably natural light) space, with minimal background noise.

Try and position your subject facing window light where possible, this will offer the best possible light without spending money on external lighting.



Try and position your subject facing window light where possible



The brightest light source behind the subject will look unflattering

Prepare your setting! Get your premises or office looking organised and well-ordered in order to make a good impression. Taking preliminary test shots or videos will help you to pick up on anything like this before the real filming starts.

On the same note, be very aware of what's in the background of the shot! You don't necessarily want to include clutter or distractions in the frame if you're delivering an important message.

Hide away any documents including sensitive information or notes. You may also want to be mindful of including personal details such as car registration plates or the exterior of your home. Someone with the wrong intentions might be able to discern these details, so be mindful of this when setting up your shot and filming.

SOUND

Using music from an artist without permission will result in your video being blocked from most social channels. You could go without music, but it might be worth considering buying some inexpensive stock music from **Pond5**, or **Audio Jungle**.

You can also get free tracks from **Free Music Archive**.

For channels such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter, most users will watch your video from their mobile, often without sound on. It's not always necessary to add sound, and speech could be accompanied by either subtitles or headings.

PERMISSIONS

Have you gotten the **permission** of those you will be filming? This is even more crucial if you are going to be filming children, or have them included in the shot. As a rule of thumb, it is best to ask adults if they are happy to be filmed. A permission slip for minors stating your intent should be handed out in order for their parents to sign-off beforehand.

STABILISATION

If **shooting via a handheld device** (such as a smartphone) having a steady hand is crucial. Shaky videos will put off viewers - although on a casual platform where video quality is not as important, such as Snapchat or Instagram Stories - this isn't as important. Filming for your website or YouTube raises the stakes in the quality department. To combat a shaky hand, you could invest or borrow a tripod for static shots.

Or for moving shots, a **gimble** (a piece of equipment that attaches to your device and counteracts the shaking) is a good investment.

BUDGET

Do you need to **spend a lot of money**? The answer is no. Luckily, there are great free resources available for post-editing, and smartphones are capable of producing good quality footage. If you want a more professional set-up, you could hire equipment or invest if you think it will be used regularly.

CHAPTER 4

DOS, DON'TS AND CHECKLIST

FILMING DOS AND DON'TS

DO

- Plan it out beforehand
- Consider your angles - filming from below can be extremely unflattering!
- Vary up your content
- Try different viewpoints. Interviews for example look professional when shot from two angles and cut together; experiment with filming your subject both straight on and at 45 degrees.



Try shooting from more than one angle



Try shooting from more than one angle

- Get inspiration from competitor brands about the style of video that engages followers within your particular sector or industry
- Tell your viewer what they're about to watch; in the description, break down exactly what your video will show them, for example: "take a look inside our brand new premises in this 360° tour"

DON'T

- Forget to ask permissions if anyone is going to be in the background of the shot
- Expect it to be perfect first time round! It's ok to take your time, practise lots and make mistakes
- Feel like you have to spend a lot of money! For sharing on social, smartphones or tablets can take effective videos
- Forget to tag your video - on YouTube and Facebook, you will be asked to attribute a number of tags that can help users to find your video. This is really important, so don't skip this step!
- For example, a fashion retailer's tags may relate to what's in the video e.g. 'autumn trends', 'scottish design', 'jeans', 'leather jacket', 'fashion show' - the more the better!

FILMING TIPS

LIGHTING

- No backlighting! Don't get your subject to stand with their back to the window, sun, or bright light source. Instead, film with your back to the light source - your subject will be well-lit and glare will be reduced.

CAMERA PLACEMENT

- Try to frame your subject (or yourself) at eye level. The last thing you want is to look unnatural on camera. This height will change depending if you're sitting or standing.
- Speaking directly to the camera can be daunting. Depending on your script, you may want to speak as if there's an interviewer just off to the camera's side.

B ROLL FOOTAGE

No video is complete without additional footage. This B Roll footage can be used as cutaways from the main footage to add more interest to your film. In a bakery for example, you may want to capture dough being kneaded, or bread coming out the oven.

- A difference in focal depths can help here. So if your main subject is $\frac{3}{4}$ of the frame, then close-ups may sit well with this.
- Try to capture scenes that start, and end the day. This adds some context to your video. Even the subject getting ready for the main film can be useful when editing together.

SOUND

- It may sound obvious, but bad sound can ruin a video. Ideally, invest in a cheap microphone which will simply plug into your camera. But if this isn't possible, perform a test with your camera first.
- The more a room echoes, the worse your sound will be. Try to limit this by shooting in a smaller space. Close any doors, and stop any background noise. Again, the acoustics are worth testing beforehand in a practise take.

BASIC CHECKLIST

- A script
- A main subject
- Camera + Tripod
- Well lit scene
- Microphone

CHAPTER 5

SOCIAL SHARING

PLATFORM SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

FACEBOOK

- Videos which are square ratio (1:1) are better fitted to Facebook's guidelines. This will ensure your video fits the frame and will give it maximum impact when scrolled past.
- Add captions as most users will be watching without sound as they scroll down their timeline - with the caption, try and explain what the video is about. Don't use too many words; a one-line caption is perfect.
- Facebook will prompt you to add tags if you're uploading videos directly onto the platform; make sure to use relevant keywords to help your video's reach to increase.

TWITTER

- Adding a personal touch can get you further on Twitter; show who the real people and faces behind your business are, or even utilise this platform for a Q&A session (users can tweet questions, you can respond in videos).
- 140 seconds is the max length, but again, try to stop users in their tracks by creating a captivating start to your video. You could do this by adding a text overlay to the start of the sequence.

YOUTUBE






- Don't skip the step of adding tags and captions to your videos. This will help SEO performance, as well as helping viewers to understand more about your video. Use this opportunity to explain more about your business, but keep it brief.
- You can also include links to your website or social pages in the description, crucial to drive viewers to make your desired action.
- Create playlists within your channel and group together similar content.

SNAPCHAT

- This platform allows for a more unfiltered style of content which doesn't have to match the likes of YouTube in quality.
- Videos are temporary (24hrs), so this could be a great way to announce a flash sale you're having.
- Billions of videos are watched on Snapchat daily - your video has to be attention grabbing to make your followers sit up and listen. Try to make an impression in the first second or so - or your video may be skipped.
- Vertical (portrait) view is best for this platform.
- Users mostly use Snapchat for entertainment; if your brand can do this, you'll remain a staple on their feed.

INSTAGRAM

- The default setting for these videos is silent or no audio. Users have to tap to hear sound, so it's likely it will be viewed without sound.
- Adding a text overlay (few words only) to your video could help to communicate your message to viewers who have not got the sound turned on.
- Hashtags in the caption - or in a comment box below - will help your video to be discovered.
- Instagram is a platform which focuses on the aesthetic value of the content; videos posted will have to have a great thumbnail and be bright and colourful.
- Instagram Stories is a popular feature among users, it works exactly like Snapchat in that updates last only 24hrs. Still images and videos can both be posted on here, and you can use Instagram's tools to overlay text, writing, emojis and more.
- 15 seconds is the Instagram Story video limit - if you have a longer video, split it into 15 second increments and upload them in succession. (You can add as many images and videos up to 15 seconds long to your story as you like).
- Establishing a signature style will help brand consistency; i.e. always use the same colour of writing, filter etc.
- In a story, you could showcase a series of products, let users follow your typical day, announce exciting new products or sales/deals, or even a Q&A.
- A live video would be an effective way to showcase an event, tell viewers important news, give a tour or conduct a live Q&A, answering questions in real time.

				
YOUTUBE	FACEBOOK	INSTAGRAM	TWITTER	SNAPCHAT
WHAT COUNTS AS A VIEW?				
30 SECONDS	3 SECONDS	3 SECONDS	ON CLICK	ON TAP
AUTO-PLAY?				
YES ONLY BETWEEN VIDEOS	YES	YES	YES	YES ONLY BETWEEN VIDEOS
AUTO-LOOP?				
NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
DEFAULT AUDIO STATE				
ON	MUTED	MUTED	ON	ON
MAXIMUM LENGTH				
NONE	2 HOURS OR 4 GIGABYTES	60 SECONDS*	30 SECONDS	10 SECOND CLIPS OR MULTIPLE CLIPS AS A STORY
EMBEDDABLE OUTSIDE PLATFORM?				
YES	YES	YES WITH FULL POST	YES	NO
VIEW COUNTS (PUBLIC)?				
YES	YES	YES	NO	NO
VIEW COUNTS (OWNER)?				
YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
METRIC DASHBOARD FOR VIDEO?				
YES	YES	ADVERTISERS ONLY	ADVERTISERS ONLY	ADVERTISERS & DISCOVER PUBLISHERS ONLY

*Length of Instagram video posts. The max Instagram Story video length is 15 seconds.

CHAPTER 6

EDITING AND UPLOADING

EDIT

For informal short videos going on social platforms, the editing stage is not always compulsory. Short videos for Snapchat, Instagram Stories or Facebook Stories can be directly uploaded - especially if the aim of your video is to entertain or film spontaneous content.

Planned brand videos however should be carefully edited, especially if they will end up on your website or YouTube. Free video editing software is available; on Macs, **iMovie** is included in the Apple package. Your PC may already contain equivalent Windows applications, such as **Wondershare Filmora** or **Windows MovieMaker**. Comprehensive user guides are available online which will guide you through the process.

UPLOAD

Uploading directly to Facebook will allow functions such as autoplay to kick in and will favourably increase the video's reach. If you copy and paste the link to your YouTube video on Facebook however, only an embedded preview will appear. This means that users will still have to click through to YouTube in order to watch it. Research suggests videos uploaded natively to each platform perform better than shared YouTube links. Why not test out both methods and see what your audience responds to best?

As with all social content, posting time influences the potential reach of your video. Choose carefully when to upload your video to social platforms in order to be seen by as many people as possible.

Typical optimal posting times include:

- 8am, people are commuting to work
- 12pm, many people are on their lunch break
- 5pm, users may be commuting home
- 8pm, users are likely to be browsing their mobiles at home

Look at how past content has performed for you. The above times are just guidelines, and your audience may differ in their browsing habits. If posts that have been published in the afternoon delivered the best results for you, this could give you an insight into best posting times for your video, according to your demographic and their browsing behaviour.

SOCIAL AND SHARING STRATEGY

If the topic of your video is urgent, for example if it announces a flash sale, then simultaneously posting across all of your social platforms at the same time will help to get the message across as quickly as possible.

Make your videos work harder for you if the topic isn't urgent. Posting on different platforms at different times, or even on different days will give your video more longevity.

Captions are key as they will make your viewer curious, and incentivised to watch. Try to convey in a concise manner and hint to the video content. Excite your audience, and compel them to watch your video.

EXAMPLES OF POST CAPTIONS TO INCLUDE:

- WATCH to learn how we make our famous donuts!
- Our founder Neil tells us what our latest award win means to him.
- Find out what's on our staff's Christmas lists!
- Have you seen our new premises? Watch for an exclusive tour!
- Longtime customer Lynn tells us what makes our service so special.
- This 2 minute video will tell you all you need to know about...
- Want to know how our product works? Watch to find out!

GET STARTED!

Good video content will be viewed, shared, liked and commented on by your following. To plan future videos, look back on what content worked well. If your audience didn't engage with your last video, this might indicate that it wasn't well matched to their wants and needs.

Lots of different factors could affect the performance of your video. The length, caption, format and content could be responsible for low engagement rates. Or, maybe you're simply using the wrong platform for your audience. By constantly reflecting and evaluating what worked well will subsequently help you to plan future video content.

Whether it's a spontaneous Snapchat video or a well-rehearsed interview for your website, there's a video style and format out there that will fit your business' message, vision and audience. Video content offers so many possibilities to businesses, and if your content isn't engaging your audience, don't be disheartened! Go back to the drawing board and try something different.

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL BUSINESS GATEWAY OFFICE

Get expert advice on this and a wide range of topics for free at your local Business Gateway office.

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