

So you've done the hard part. You wrote the script (or asked the questions), shot the footage, and edited everything into a concise, interesting, helpful video. ...Now what? Where do you post your video online? Who's going to watch it? How will you know how it's doing? Will a YouTuber think that your video is "totally lame?"

So many questions, and in this episode of SparkPlug, we have ten answers. Andrew King, the Director of Video Production at Sparksight, shares ten tips in five minutes on how to distribute video content online. From picking the right platforms to avoiding watermarks and ads, these tips will help you get started in the increasingly popular world of online video.

1 Use a Video Syndication Site

It doesn't make sense to spend an entire day posting to dozens of different sites. Instead, hit all of them at once with a site that automatically syndicates your content. TubeMogul allows you to upload your video once, select which platforms you want to post to (such as YouTube, Blip.tv, Vidler, Vimeo, etc), and then with one click it begins a simultaneous upload to all of the platforms. What's more, TubeMogul sends you an email to let you know when the video is posted on each site.

2 caveats for this: First, always review the video once it is posted to a platform. It may be that TubeMogul's conversion process causes quality loss. If so, you might consider manually uploading to that site specifically in the correct format. The other thing to note is that some sites have time limits. YouTube has a 10 minute cap, so if you're trying to post a 30 minute tutorial, skip YouTube altogether: the video will just be rejected.

2 Pick the Right Platforms

If you've ever read the comments on YouTube videos, you might have noticed that YouTubers can be... a bit immature at times. So if you have a serious corporate video, you might consider skipping sites like YouTube and CollegeHumor.com. If nothing else, at least turn off the comments.

Instead, go with a few broad audience platforms like blip.tv and vimeo, and then hone in on the demographics you want to target. So for example if you are posting a How-to video, consider posting on HowCast.com. The site is devoted solely to how-to videos, so you can guarantee that your audience will be ready to learn what you want to teach. Watch some of the videos on a platform you're considering and you can quickly determine the audience that the platform has, and if it's the right fit for your video.

3 Track Your Analytics

More and more video sites are offering detailed analytics for your videos. Sites like YouTube and TubeMogul have impressive sets of tools for tracking how your content is being viewed. You can check out a number of things, including view comparisons between videos, countries that are watching, and even your audience's attention span, which tells you when in the video you lost viewers.

These tools may be boring, but they are invaluable and can help you form a better media campaign in the future. Use the data from your view comparisons (which compare view rates across platforms) to help you with Tip #2 in the future.

4 Avoid Watermarks

Usually, if you're posting a video to the web, you're going to include it on your company's site as well. If you go the traditional route of using a content delivery network and linking it through your site, try to use a platform that won't throw a big watermark on your video. I prefer blip.tv for this very reason. Their logo is part of the player bar, which is much less annoying than a giant YouTube in the corner, and it means I don't have to worry about name keys or logos becoming obscured.



5 Use Tags and Descriptions Wisely

I know how frustrating it can be... you've worked on a video for quite a while, and you're ready to get it online. Maybe you've even got a ton people that are chomping at the bits to see the video. But you should still take the time to write some compelling copy for the description, and pick out some helpful tags to go with the video. If you don't do this, the video is virtually unsearchable, and you'll lose views because of it.

6 Don't Allow Advertising

Some platforms, like blip.tv, give you the option to advertise as a way to "make you money." Don't bother. First, the return on that will be miniscule, and second, you will alienate and annoy your viewers. They've decided to take the time to watch your video, so as a "thank you for watching," opt out of advertising if given the choice.

7 Create and Maintain Channels

When you create an account and begin posting content, you will occasionally need to re-post something because of a typo, etc. Be sure to treat your channel (the area of your account where all of your posted videos are pooled) as you would your company website. Keep it clear of clutter, including outdated or redundant posts. Your channel will often be the first thing people see, so make sure it's worth seeing.

8 Get the Link Out

Your video is pointless if no one watches. So make sure you are getting the link out there. Post it on Twitter, on blogs, on your company site, wherever you can. Trusting solely on a random YouTuber stumbling on your video and making it viral will leave your video virtually unwatched.

9 Pick a Good Thumbnail Image

Usually, when you post your video online, the CDN will automatically select a thumbnail. This is typically the first or middle frame of your video, and is usually not the most flattering representation of your video. Upload a thumbnail of your choosing, or make a title card that describes the video. Be sure to upload the thumbnail *at the same time as the video*, or you may be stuck with the default image.

10 Cross-Promote Your Videos

If you are running a media campaign and have more than one video that you want viewed, be sure to cross-promote them. If you have a dedicated page where all of your videos "live," then you can mention the link at the end of each video to point viewers toward your other videos.* Likewise, on sites like YouTube you can "respond" to a video with one of your own. Try responding to your videos with the accompanying ones, so that viewers who like your video can quickly navigate to the others.

*Kinda like we do right here!

