Divide to Conquer:
How to Tame the Online Video Content Beast

New Strategies to Create the Right Video Content without Breaking the Bank.

A White Paper by
KnowledgeVision Systems

www.knowledgevision.com
Executive Brief

“...video is everything, and any business—big or small—that refuses to believe that is taking a huge risk of being forgotten. Publishers are becoming brands, brands are becoming publishers. ... and it’s all video.”

Jeremy Scott, Editor-in-Chief, REELSEO.com
[ http://tinyurl.com/video-rs1 ]

Demand for online video is growing in every sector of business—from content marketing and sales enablement to learning and training; from corporate communications to investor relations. Video content is the new black, but it’s more than a passing fad.

Online video brings your message to life. It engages your audience. Video drives action where other mediums no longer do. According to emarketer.com [ http://tinyurl.com/video-em1 ], virtually 60% of executives surveyed by Forbes said they would watch video before reading text on the same webpage. Nearly 65% of respondents would visit a vendor’s website after viewing a work-related online video.

Online video works for business – and budgets for video are continuing to grow.

In fact, a recent Ad-ology study, 2011 Small Business Marketing Forecast [ http://tinyurl.com/video-sbmf ], found that 45% of small businesses planned to increase resources for online video (double last year’s number). And Interactive Media Strategies reports that companies across the board, of all sizes, plan to grow year-over-year business video spending by 27% in 2012 – even after an increase of 32% in 2011.

Total Spending on Online Business Video Technologies
($ millions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Spending</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>1,126</td>
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</tbody>
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Fig. 1. In 2012, companies plan to grow video spending by 27%.

SOURCE: Interactive Media Strategies
"Business Video Market Forecast 2011-2015", April 2011; 1002 respondents
But the uncomfortable truth is that demand for online video is growing much faster than budgets to produce it. Every corporate message begs for a video. Every training course. Every offer. Business people expect video. Content marketers are absolutely ravenous for fresh video content, which is key to their inbound and lead nurture efforts. And since messages, offers, online classes, and products change constantly, you need to keep churning out updates before your precious online video assets go stale. Whether you are a professional video producer, marketer, salesperson, corporate trainer, or the head of HR, you likely feel the pressure to produce more video content with less.

Without a modern approach to producing it, the online video content beast can devour your precious content budget before you know it. This paper will introduce a strategic approach for creating video content within budget and with production methods appropriate to the intended use.

Three simple strategies for taming the online video content beast

1. *Slice up your video needs into three segments, and employ different production approaches in each tier.*

Imagine you have $60,000 in your annual content budget earmarked for online video. Would you rather spend your entire budget on three Hollywood-style online video assets at $20,000 a pop, or can you live with just one video masterpiece and save the remaining $40,000 to create dozens of perfectly good videos for scores of different uses?
Showpiece videos

These are the splashy pieces that grace the front door to your website. They play in your trade show booth. They kick off your sales meetings. They energize new hires. They are meant to turn heads, to grab attention, to get the heart pounding, and to stop a viewer in his or her tracks. Pull out all the stops on these videos, as they help define your company and the aura that surrounds it.

While showpiece videos are not inexpensive, it's likely that your organization needs just a few and they won't require regular updating. Hire an expert video production house to tackle showpiece video, the head of the video content beast.

Workhorse videos

These videos explain your most important products, inform employees about new corporate policies and procedures, introduce your key technologies, and employ your most visible people to help keep your organization on the same page, keep skills sharp, and move prospective buyers along in the buying process. They're important because they show and explain at a high level. They are crisp, clear, and are typically the videos that get passed around when a group is involved in a buying decision or when new information must be shared and learned consistently. You don’t need to be splashy or cute here – just focused, authoritative, and clear...and with a style that conveys the personality of your organization.

The expenditure per minute for workhorse video, the body of the content beast, can be one-fifth what your showpieces will cost. Today, powerful, cost-effective online video production tools make it easy for video producers to keep up with demand for workhorse video.
Long-tail videos

For sales and marketing, video is a great way to draw prospects into a much deeper understanding of your products and the thinking behind them, as well as to answer frequently asked questions. And with the multiple influencers you need to touch, and the various interests of all involved in the buying decision, a high volume of low-cost, targeted videos is useful.

This is where subject-matter experts in your company can really shine -- the people in the trenches who invent your technologies and support your customers in the field. And the subject matter covered is typically on subjects of more limited interest: they exist on the “long tail” of interest [http://tinyurl.com/video-tail](http://tinyurl.com/video-tail).

Demand for high volumes of low-cost online video is also exploding across training and corporate communications. As organizations struggle to keep up with the lightening speed of business, long-tail video is more and more vital.

And now, dead-easy, free online video tools are available that allow anyone in the organization to quickly and easily create and share long-tail online video assets in minutes.

When you don’t need to sweat the cost and complexity, it’s easier to experiment with video, test and refine your messages, and identify the winning content that may deserve “promotion” to higher production values – with a larger effort.

The long-tail of the video content beast can be critically important to your content strategy; the key is to preserve the power of video while keeping the expenditure very, very low.

Allocating your video content budget among these three tiers – and making sure you spend appropriately for each video you produce – is a critical first step. But it’s just a start.
2. **Broaden your definition of what a video is.**

“Clients can get more bang for their video buck by repurposing interviews that were initially gathered for highly polished longer-form stories. For example, individual sound bites can be reused and put on a client’s website as video snippets that can answer specific questions or explain in more detail. Viewing a variety of targeted web video snippets in this fashion can help visitors gain insight and drive deeper engagement with a product, service, or brand.”

Mont Fennel, Senior Video Producer, DigiNovations & former Emmy-winning television business reporter

Over the course of years, network television engrained in us a concept of what a video is. It’s a linear story, with a beginning, a middle, and an end. It’s designed to be viewed from beginning to end. All the action happens within a 16-by-9 frame. It’s a largely passive experience; watch it or turn it off. And it’s got a certain “look” provided by high production values.

A great example of showpiece video can be found on the [home page of the General Motors website](http://gm.com/). The entire background of the GM home page is a showpiece video showing big, dramatic scenes of glistening corporate buildings with clouds streaming by, designers burning the midnight oil, close ups of sculptors shaving microns of unwanted clay, and cutting-edge technology being harnessed to produce the vehicles of the future. Impressive, high-dollar stuff.
Piper Aircraft recently enlisted former CBS/ABC anchor Morton Dean to host a mini-documentary on a new jet aircraft initiative [http://tinyurl.com/video-pa1]. It’s a classic example of a showpiece video – 8 minutes, with full story arc, divided into multiple sections.

That’s what your showpiece videos should look like, too. And in fact, online showpieces will break some of the network TV boundaries over time, by becoming more interactive and engaging and non-linear.

But what about the rest of your video portfolio, where you can’t afford to do the “full Spielberg” on every bit of workhorse and long-tail video content? That’s where it’s helpful to broaden your definition of what’s acceptable – and even what’s video.

**Short, educational mini-segments**

When you discover a good, expert storyteller in the organization, take advantage of the opportunity to create a series of mini-segments. In addition to the showpiece video shown above, Piper Aircraft created a much simpler series of “Tech Tour” videos, consisting only of an engineer, a computer, and a mouse, taking viewers inside the design of this new aircraft. Here’s one short segment [http://tinyurl.com/video-pa2].

Six of these segments were filmed at a single 90-minute seating, keeping the per-segment budget low but the impact high.
**Formula-based videos**

Clothing retailer Zappos has evolved a formula approach that takes workhorse and long-tail video to a science. The company has posted literally thousands of “video descriptions” of its products, like [this](http://tinyurl.com/video-zp1). Zappos, rather than using the manufacturer’s video, create their own featuring the product, an enthusiastic presenter who exudes the Zappos culture and knowledge of the product, and useful features commentary. Each is less than 60 seconds, very simply produced (the budget per video is probably under $50, since their shop produces around 60 to 80 per day, and is reported to raise conversions by between 6 and 30 percent. That’s a high ROI!)

**Text-and-still videos**

Every video doesn’t need to be a documentary, complete with interviews and “B-roll”. Nestle Waters, for example, has a [long-tail video series](http://tinyurl.com/video-nw) that addresses frequently asked questions about bottled water. Most of each segment is just a series of text slides...complemented by still images. No voiceover required. Each segment is search-optimized around keywords reflecting the most common concerns about bottled water. And because these are highly modular, they could be created and added to the collection one at a time, spreading the effort and expense out over time.

**Man on the Street**

The material you use doesn’t always need to come from inside the organization. Sometimes you can get surprising results just by taking a camera out on Main Street and asking passers-by to help with your content, like a [suburban Boston auto dealer did](http://tinyurl.com/video-bad).

Total field production time: about 3 hours.
Salman Khan, hedge fund analyst-turned global educator, has made a huge splash in online learning with Khan Academy [http://tinyurl.com/video-ka1], which features nearly 3,000 online, on-demand video courses. He develops each lesson by combining simple screen capture and drawing software. But Khan’s revolution is not in the tools themselves, but in the way this form of on-demand video lectures can be used to turn education on its head. By assigning the video lectures as homework, students can pause and repeat and learn the background information at their own pace. Subsequently, students and instructor can use class time for more interactive group problem solving and discussion. This “flipped classroom” has great potential in corporate e-learning and training for cost savings, as the core materials can be distributed online worldwide, allowing for scale, progress monitoring, and self-paced learning. Here’s an introduction to inflation [http://tinyurl.com/video-ka2] that Khan Academy developed for Visa.
Online video presentations

Perhaps the easiest way to make video assets is by taking PowerPoint presentations, combining them with your best communicators, and weaving them together into online video presentations. What organization doesn’t have a library of presentations and a really great storyteller for each of their products, technologies, policies and concepts? For example, the international strategy consulting firm Parthenon Group puts out a regular [economic outlook video presentation](http://tinyurl.com/video-pg), featuring its chief economist, Roger Brinner. These are simple to produce but powerful in effect, because they combine the detailed analytical charts with the authority and color that Mr. Brinner’s commentary provides.

These are just some of many ways to create video content without pulling out all the stops. The key is to keep it simple, while at the same time not compromising on basic production values like good sound, good lighting, and a steady camera.

3. **Enlist a video-creation community in your organization and repurpose existing content.**

You really can get a lot of great online video produced by yourself. By why not share the effort – and the glory – with others in your organization? Many companies are bursting at the seams with valuable, re-useable digital content, and great storytellers. Use these resources! Let your subject-matter experts focus on the content, and assure them that you’ll take care of the rest.

The first thing to realize is that potential video content is all around you, every day. Every time an executive keynotes a conference, a product manager gives a briefing to the sales team, a technologist gives a customer briefing, that’s potential marketing, training, or corporate communications content. Smart organizations keep their antennae up, watching for opportunities to videotape these sessions for possible re-use. Even if you don’t use that exact presentation because it may be situation-specific, you can ask the presenter to recreate a more generic version for broader purposes.

Sure, some will run the other way if you mention you need help with a video. Being recorded is the last thing that some folks want. Change your tack with the more timid types and just point out that you
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need their subject matter expertise. They’re sure to warm up over time and share their valuable knowledge in the form of existing slides, graphs, charts, etc. You can narrate the online video presentation for them. Once they see the finished video they may come to you with their next great video content idea and be ready for the camera.

Online retailer Zappos.com makes it look really easy to get everyone involved and employs dozens of their own employees – subject matter experts – to help develop thousands of online videos that sell. In an interview with Grant Crowell of REELSEO [http://tinyurl.com/video-rs2], Zappos Video Product Manager Laurie Williams said, “We also want to show off Zappos’ quirky personality . . . We want employees to know the product really well. . . We want them to trust them before they purchase the item.” When asked what advice she would provide to businesses of all sizes when using online video, Williams states, “Personal engagement is a big thing at Zappos. That’s what I’d say is helping us sell.”

**Conclusion**

No matter what ideas you are trying to sell – from marketing messages to new training concepts, creating video for any type of business communication doesn’t have to be hard. And it doesn’t need to be expensive. By dividing your content needs into tiers and matching production process to these tiers, you too can stay within budget AND unleash the full personal engagement and persuasive power of video on your prospects, employees, and partners. When you start to rethink your definition of online video, explore new tools, and leverage the value of your internal subject matter experts and existing content, you can tame the video content beast.
About KnowledgeVision

KnowledgeVision is the world’s most flexible online video presentation platform. Synchronizing video, presentation slides, images, animations, just-in-time footnotes, and virtual handouts, KnowledgeVision presentations may be embedded within any website for on-demand, live, and mobile applications.

KnowledgeVision is reinventing the business presentation for an online, on-demand, multi-sensory, anytime/anywhere world.

About KVStudio

KVStudio, KnowledgeVision’s powerful, easy-to-learn authoring tool works with a robust cloud-based system to make online presentations easy to deliver, organize, and maintain. With no special hardware required, KnowledgeVision presentations can be built and published on Windows, Mac, and Linux computers. Special programs for independent producers and content creators are available.

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