

# Tips for Adding Video To a Business Web Site

By SARAH E. NEEDLEMAN

Want to make your small-business Web site sticky? Try adding video to your marketing mix. Video has become a staple of the Internet in recent years, and there are many simple, low-cost ways for entrepreneurs to hop on the bandwagon.

"Tomorrow's consumers will want to read less and watch more, so you will be at a competitive disadvantage if you don't use video as part of your public face," says Peter Horan, chief executive officer of AllBusiness.com, an online media and e-commerce company based in San Francisco. "You want to ride the horse in the direction it's going."

## [When You're Writer, Director and Producer](#)

Guidelines for creating an effective video for your business.



**Video clip:** Jay Whitehead, president of Outsourcing Today on how his company used online video in a marketing campaign.

Nearly half of more than 1,200 U.S. Internet users polled in a recent survey say they watch online video at least once a month, according to the Online Publishers Association, an industry group in New York.

Here are three tips for small-business owners on adding video to a Web site.

**Use what you've got.** If your firm previously produced a television commercial or received media coverage in a digital format, you may be able to post the footage online for free, says Charles Armstrong, a senior art director at Spark Inc., a boutique advertising and design agency in

Tampa, Fla.

In 2005, Monticciolo Sedation Dentistry in New Port Richey, Fla., paid Mr. Armstrong's company about \$15,000 to produce a 30-second TV ad, but nothing extra to have the [commercial](#) posted on the company's Web site. It's still there, averaging about 500 views a month, while the company's budget allowed the commercial to be aired for only seven weeks on a local TV station, says Mr. Armstrong.

Also, footage from a video camera, camera phone, DVD or other digital format can be adapted for the Web using conversion programs such as Sorenson Squeeze Compression Suite 4.5, Pinnacle Studio 10, Final Cut Express 3.5 or Adobe Premiere Elements 3.0.

Not tech-savvy? Your Web-hosting provider may be able to handle the task for little or no additional cost.

This month, Secaucus, N.J.-based eFashion Solutions Inc. is expected to post a video on its Web site featuring segments from four clips of its chief executive officer, Ed Foy, being interviewed by the media. The company, which launched in 2002 and powers Web sites for 25 apparel manufacturers, hired three video experts in October, says Justin Schaldone, vice president of marketing.

"[The video] shows the exposure eFashion has gotten in the marketplace and illustrates what we've achieved over the past four years," he says.

**Solicit submissions.** Invite consumers to submit their own videos to be posted on your Web site.

Black Diamond Equipment Ltd., an outdoor sporting-gear retailer, urges amateur and professional filmmakers to send videos about rock climbing and skiing for its Web site's [video gallery](#). Since its launch in 2003, 15 videos have been posted, and as of October, they've been viewed about 6,800 times, says Adam Chamberlain, brand manager for the Salt Lake City company. Submissions are edited and posted online by company employees, he says.

The gallery was created to increase customer interaction, adds Mr. Chamberlain. "We wanted to give people a voice on our Web site," he explains. "If we keep things dynamic and growing, it gives people a reason to come back." [Read a related article: "[Good Match: Video Contest Boosts Quirky Product](#)."] ]

If you sell products from manufacturers, licensors or third-party suppliers, ask if they can provide video content for you to post on your company Web site at no cost.

**Earlier this year, Ty's Toy Box LLC, an online retailer in Erlanger, Ky., received permission at no cost to post three [videos](#) of performances by the Funkees, an Australian children's entertainment group, says Ty Simpson, president and founder. The four-year-old company sells CDs and DVDs of the band, which was created by Imagination Ventures Pty. Ltd. of Australia, he says. The videos have viewed about 10,000 times in the first month since going live in December, and more than 60% of sales of the Funkees products since then were made by consumers who watched them, says Mr. Simpson.**

**Make it educational or entertaining. Videos aimed at consumers should offer some kind of value to sustain viewers' interests, says Mr. Horan. "Think from perspective of viewer," he says. "Why should they spend time with you?"**

You may want to show your products being used, he suggests. For example, if you sell cookware, you might make a video that demonstrates how to prepare a meal with your products. Humor also may help captivate Web viewers. In January 2004, Outsourcing Today LLC, a small publishing company in Roseland, N.J., posted a video on its Web site that mocked the reality TV show "The Apprentice" to promote an upcoming conference. The three-and-a-half-minute video showed the firm's president, Jay Whitehead, as a Donald Trump-like character interviewing two job hunters who were played by actors. The video spoofs a human-resources show to an HR audience, "so they all got the joke," he says.

The video cost about \$2,150 to make and was viewed 85,000 times in the four months it was on the company's home page, says Mr. Whitehead. "It wasn't the only factor, but it helped boost conference attendance to well over 2,500 from 1,500 the year before," he says. More than 16,000 subscribers to the company's email newsletter were notified about the video in an email sent the same day the video went live, says Mr. Whitehead. "It was just viral. The word spread like wildfire," he says.

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