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Producing your own videos isn't costly and could boost your profile online

Rod Solar | 01/11/2017

At a Glance

- Marketing has changed. Many consumers – and potential patients – would rather watch a video than read a website
- Pro-quality video production used to be expensive, but today, anyone with a good smartphone and some know-how can do a great job
- Creating amateur video and social media video streaming are two excellent ways of engaging and attracting potential clients into your practice
- Making and posting your own content may seem scary, but it's worth your while to embrace it – it's the future of marketing!



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Reference: 1. Dua HS, Said DG, Messmer EM, et al. Neurotrophic keratopathy. *Prog Retin Eye Res.* 2018;66:107-131.
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WATCH VIDEO

Entrepreneur and public speaker Seth Godin once said “marketing is no longer about the stuff you make, but the stories you tell.” In the digital age, one of the best mediums for telling our stories is video. Are you using it? If not, why not?

There's no denying that marketing has changed – the explosion of social media and self-generated content means we're seeing an appetite for something that feels authentic – something that Donald Trump has recently used very effectively. Gone are the days when people were solely interested in looking at a product, understanding its features and advantages and so on. Today, they're more interested in who you are. What's your story? What's the story behind this product or service? Anyone who's ever enjoyed a film or TV show can understand why video is an outstanding storytelling medium – so if you want to appeal to today's consumers, it's an invaluable way to promote yourself.

Ophthalmology is no exception – if you want to promote your practice and attract new patients, video can have a huge effect. Many practices are already online, with websites and a social media presence. But if you want to have the biggest impact, video could be the way to go. There are many ways you can use video, but there are also obstacles that can hold you back from trying (see “Barriers to Video”). Two of these – concerns about your brand, and about permanence, can be overcome by embracing video rather than fearing it. And as for the price – this isn't nearly the issue it was years ago.

“*If you want to have the biggest impact, video could be the way to go.*”

Barriers to Video

“I'm protecting my brand”

This is a major reason why people hold back on producing video, even though they're happy to produce written or visual content. Video exposes you – you can't hide behind anything, and that can cause people to feel quite protective of the image that they have of themselves – and that's perfectly understandable.

But here's the problem with that: you don't control your brand anymore. Today we have social media, review sites, comments, bloggers, vloggers, the list goes on – and this has completely changed the conversation. It's no longer a broadcasting model, where you talk to an audience about what you do. Now, the audience talks about you amongst themselves, and shares information, experiences and opinions with no input from you. Brands are elevated or demolished every day in the marketplace, and it's all done by the customer. If someone gets an impression of you, good or bad, they can share it. You can't control that, but you can definitely influence the process. So if people are going

to be talking about you anyway, you might as well be part of the conversation. Don't sit outside – get in there and make your voice heard!

“I can't afford it”

In the past, you needed to spend a lot to get good quality video, but that's changed. Quality has increased, and cost has come down. Video is highly accessible now – which is good news for those of us who don't have an abundant budget.

“Once it's online, it's online forever”

Yes, once it's out there, it's extremely difficult to get rid of. So there's no easy answer for this. But it shouldn't stop you – just be confident that you're prepared; know what you want to say and how you're going to say it. And ultimately, if you're willing to say something to a patient, why shouldn't you be willing to say it to a bigger audience? You might make some mistakes, but the good news is that many, many people are making their own video now, which means audiences are a lot less judgmental about the type of mistakes you're likely to make.

“But I've got stage fright!”

It takes a lot of courage to get in front of a camera. But as an ophthalmologist, you walk into the OR every day and perform surgeries, some of which carry a lot of risks – and you don't seem to have much performance anxiety when it comes to that! With video, you just need a little practice. If you can create a video in which you feel confident, and look and sound as good as you can, you'll find it gets easier. And some people even end up finding it very enjoyable.

Why Use Video?

Patient education

Many rather professional-looking videos are made for this purpose, with features such as animations to demonstrate how parts of the body work.

Profiles

These are typically the domain of large companies with very significant budgets – large corporations might spend thousands of dollars to get a big, high production value profile video done. Historically, these types of video have been out of the reach of most entrepreneurs and new businesses.

Service descriptions

Organizations may describe their services on video – either how things are done, or descriptions of the products they offer.

Testimonials

Patient testimonials are increasingly common – healthcare organizations ask patients to speak on video about their experiences.

Patient interviews

This is a more extended version of a testimonial, where someone interviews the patient about their experience. This can provide a little bit more depth than a testimonial, and can be an extremely useful exercise.

Case studies

Here, we follow the patient through the process involved in having a procedure. Many of these are quite heavily scripted – although this isn't always a negative point. They're prepared, they're polished, and they tell a story.

Frequently asked questions

These can be aimed at the patient, and relate to the questions they might ask, or can be used for internal training. If you have staff who are working in your clinic who aren't answering questions in the way you'd prefer, these videos can encourage them to use your words and methods when dealing with enquires.

Community engagement

This is where social media comes in to the mix – this type of video can engage patients or prospects with your brand, and help them understand a bit more about you and your background. More the domain of amateur video, whether it's Facebook, Periscope, or any platform that allows you to create live video. The nice thing about these platforms is that they encourage real-time engagement and interaction from your audience. For example, a doctor could announce that they plan to hold a live Q&A at 8 o'clock on a Wednesday and answer any questions people pose to them about a particular subject area – that can be extremely engaging for your audience.

Webinars

This is a more formalized approach to community engagement that gives you a bit more control of the content. Often it will be in the form of a series of webinars, and also involves engaging with the community, who can communicate with you using the webinar software.

Counting the cost

The expense of producing video is all down to what you're making. There are three main levels: premium, professional, and amateur. Premium video is the type used by Hollywood – it's incredibly expensive, very high quality, and something you might use for a television advert. But it's overkill for everyday practice promotion. Why? It can cost between \$20,000 and \$50,000 for just a few minutes of film.

Next, there's professional video. The benefits include the predictable, good quality: you know what it's going to look like before you pay for it. The risk is that it can be a little boring and self-centered – but it doesn't have to be! If you're careful about choosing the story the video follows, and keeping things as genuine as possible, it will be engaging. Don't just talk about yourself – talk directly to your audience, and try and empathize with your patients' needs. A few minutes of professional video could cost you \$1,000 to \$3,000, but if you're smart about how you plan and coordinate the filming, you can get the cost lowered.

Finally, there's amateur video; the footage you film yourself. It has a bit of a bad name, but it shouldn't – and it offers some great benefits. The risk is (of course) variable quality, which depends entirely on your own talent and the tools you use (see "Straight to Video"). That can be scary for people, but it's something you can overcome. You might

not necessarily use this type of video for a business profile, or a service description, unless you're really confident you can deliver something close to professional. There is some practice involved, and you need to learn how to plan, film, produce, and upload video. However, it's well worth the effort.

The total cost of the kit I use (and you don't need everything – for example all of the tripods, or two lights or microphones), came to under \$400 when I last priced it. That's incredibly affordable – even if you try it, and don't like it, it's not a big risk. So why not go for it?

Playing it straight

So we're ready to make a video. But what do people want to see? The answer, corny as it might sound, is: the real you. They want honesty. That means speaking off the cuff; talking from experience. You don't want to read rigidly from a script and pretend to be someone you're not. They also want honesty in patient testimonials – they want to hear the great, the good, and perhaps even the so-so. It doesn't all have to be perfect – although luckily, in ophthalmology there tend to be a lot of glowing testimonials.

People also want to get involved, and interact during live videos and webinars. They want the opportunity to comment and ask questions in real-time. This is where social media streaming options (such as Facebook Live and Periscope) can be invaluable.

Video: Some Statistics

Businesses using video grow company revenue 49% or faster year-on-year than organizations without video (1)

Video drives a ~157% increase in organic traffic from search engines (2)

70% of marketers now claim that video produces more conversions than any other type of content (3)

Social video generates ~1,200 more shares than text and images combined (1)

When text and video are both available on a webpage, 59% of senior executives prefer to watch the video instead of reading the text (4)

Video on a landing page can increase conversions by 80% or more (5)

74% of millennials find video helpful when comparison shopping, and 60% prefer to watch video over reading a newsletter (6)

Nearly two thirds of consumers (62%) are likely to have a negative perception of a brand that publishes poor quality video (7)

In my opinion, consumers are changing (see “Video: Some Statistics”). They’ve become a lot more sophisticated, and they know nonsense when they see it. So if you’re confident about your services and your practice, and feel good about what you do, there should be absolutely nothing in the way of you getting out there so that people can see that confidence in your eyes, and hear it in your voice. So why wait? Get filming and show them what you’re all about.

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References

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