

Why Most Marketing Videos Don't Work

Every now and then I will meet someone who has commissioned a marketing video that did not work for their company. It is a sad state of affairs and it is avoidable.

Over the years, I have been given many failed corporate communications videos to watch and have found that they all suffer from one or more of the following problems.

1. A poorly written script

This would have to be one of the most common problems. The script provides the backbone to any video project and it must be perfect. It needs to be to the point, clear and interesting.

Often scripts get written in-house resulting in wordy and highly detailed pieces of prose that do not translate well onto the screen. Quite frankly, they are boring. Unfortunately, pretty shots and expert editing cannot hide a tedious narrative.

Worse still, is when the script goes back and forth and the content is played out in an illogical sequence. This results in no viewer being able to quickly understand your core marketing messages, if they can understand it at all.

Ideally, a script conveys the most important pieces of information that your target market wants to know and is written with an objective in mind.

2. The video is too long

In this day and age of high speed broadband and other time-saving devices, very few of us have attention spans that can handle information for more than a few minutes.

Any video over 10 minutes is destined to lose viewers after the first few minutes.

Yet, surprisingly there are many marketing videos today that are well over 12 minutes in length.

The best marketing videos are short and succinct. Yet, it is far easier to cram everything into a video than to make a short and concise one. In the words of Blaise Pascal, "The present letter is a very long one, simply because I had no leisure to make it shorter".

3. "The "look mum I'm on TV" scenario

While some of us may cringe at the thought of a camera placed in front of us, there are many people who relish the opportunity to show their face on television.

This can result in corporate heads droning on incessantly about how wonderful their company is (and what a great job they are doing). Sadly, this does nothing else but soothe corporate egos and turn viewers away.

Few people realise that talking to a camera in an appealingly manner is a skill in itself. Having a CEO spilling boring corporate fluff while looking dumbstruck and awkward in front of the camera does not a good video make.

However, a charismatic business leader who uses short, punchy (and rehearsed) sentences can add tremendous impact and clout to a marketing video.

4. Poor production values

While watching your corporate video, your customers will be left with an impression of what type of business you are and what to expect when doing business with you.

A fast way to subconsciously get across the wrong image to your viewer is to have grainy pictures, poorly framed shots and sloppy editing.

A well thought out and professionally created television program will create a positive impression in the minds of your prospects. After all, we all watch television and we are used to broadcast quality productions, not wobbly and unfocused shots that scream 'amateurish'.

To produce a good quality television program, it must be made using an experienced A-grade cameraman, a broadcast quality camera and a fully trained editor

5. Target audience is too diverse

Many marketing videos often try to get as many messages out to a diverse audience.

It is very difficult to produce a video that is 'all things to all people'. After all, communicating to primary school students, overseas buyers and consumers all in the one video is an extremely difficult feat to pull.

Research has found that advertising that targets a number of market segments results in higher profits than advertising that sells to a mass market.

Likewise, marketing videos that target a small audience are more successful than those aimed at a large audience. It is often wise to produce several television programs for different audiences, rather than cram all of your messages into one confusing video.

6. Let's do a video, just because we can!

It might seem far-fetched but there are companies that embark on commissioning a marketing video without really assessing if they need one.

This can be due to a number of reasons such as using up available budgets, satisfying corporate egos and employees creating work for themselves.

You are probably wondering why a video communication producer would even complain about this situation. The answer is simple.

A marketing video is an effective tool to increase sales in a company. It is actually painful and embarrassing to watch a video that is a shameless waste of company money.

Poorly produced videos might line the pockets of some video producers, but they do little to convince future clients that they are worthwhile.

If you are in the market for a marketing video, make sure you follow these simple guidelines to ensure your project is a success, rather than destined for the rubbish bin.

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Article Source: http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Marie-Claire_Ross