

# Supercharge your video strategy: six things you need to know





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# Executive summary.

Online video is one of the fastest growing marketing channels.<sup>1</sup> Brands like Oreo, Dove, GoPro and Red Bull have built up valuable audiences of advocates through smart, creative video strategies.

But there's a problem.

Too often brands approach video without the strategy or focus seen in other communication channels. This lack of strategy drives short term ad hoc briefs, with unclear objectives and an over-reliance on view counts as a measure of success. Long term brand value suffers as a result.

A more strategic and customer centric approach is needed. This should be based around a solid brief and focus on distribution as much as content. This allows brands to take a long term view and make their video content work much harder.

We believe that a more strategic approach to video marketing will drive deeper brand engagement and deliver better business results.

In this white paper we outline our top tips for developing a successful video strategy, including:

1. Stronger briefing
2. Planning distribution from the outset
3. Designing for the channel
4. Being bold, thinking differently
5. Keeping the conversation going over time
6. Testing, learning and optimising

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# The (big) deal with video.

Brands are investing in video, but aren't getting the right results. Why? Frankly, video is treated like advertising. Too many brands try to force a traditional TV structure onto digital channels. This is killing their chances of success and limiting the power of their content. Video needs to be able to reach its full potential. It needs to be consistent, always-on, and responsive.

Brands need to think about video strategies now. Because soon, it will be too late.

In 2018, it's expected that 79% of all internet traffic will be from video.<sup>2</sup> Facebook autoplay videos already have one billion views every day, driving higher levels of engagement than YouTube.<sup>3</sup>

And video is going mobile - fast. Already, 65% of Facebook's video views and 40% of YouTube's traffic come from mobile.<sup>4,5</sup> This is set to increase over the next few years, driven in part by our growing phone screen sizes (iPhone 6 users watch more video content than those with previous models with smaller screens).<sup>6,7</sup> This shift to mobile is good news for brands. Video consumption on a smartphone is a more focussed and less distracted experience.<sup>8</sup>

Mobile video is now the fastest growing digital ad format and brands increased video advertising spend by 59% last year.<sup>9</sup>

The relationship between brands and publishers is also changing in online video. For instance, BuzzFeed is investing heavily in its video production arm, collecting vast amounts of data to learn why people share content.<sup>10</sup> It uses this to inspire and test new content to constantly improve performance.

Video is also allowing brands to become publishers and, in the case of Red Bull, create new revenue streams.<sup>11</sup> Through its video strategy, Red Bull has created a distinct brand identity. It successfully built an audience around its content that probably wouldn't be there if it only focussed on energy drinks.

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**A powerful way  
to earn consumer  
attention.**



The scale of the online video audience (in the billions) is only rivalled by more expensive channels such as television and cinema advertising. Video can be delivered at a fraction of the cost, with more sophisticated targeting and better tracking.

It also provides a more immersive experience than other forms of communication. Viewers can remember up to twice as much information from video, compared to written material.

With the right approach, it's possible to create audiences of brand advocates. These audiences are more likely to research brands further and share more content.<sup>12</sup>

Oreo has built an army of brand fans, thanks to Vine campaigns like #oreosnackhacks. It creates fun and engaging content, while keeping its product central to the idea.

Volvo increased its YouTube subscriber base from 3,500 to 91,000 since its famous 'trucks' video launched.<sup>13</sup> The video provided Volvo with a receptive audience of fans, ready to engage with the next piece of content.

There are proven commercial benefits too. Branded video can increase click-through-rates (CTRs), time spent on site, purchase intent and sales.<sup>14, 15</sup> GoPro experienced this when it began to publish regular content focussed on its customers' passions.<sup>16</sup> As video views increased, so did direct sales.<sup>17</sup>

Dollar Shave Club had to rapidly expand its manufacturing operation to cope with the immediate increase in demand for products as a result of its comedy launch video.<sup>18</sup>

Red Bull enjoyed a 7% increase in US sales after the Stratos mission was captured on film and watched by millions.<sup>19</sup>

The potential for collecting data and tracking performance is only just being realised. Robust, real time data can provide valuable insights, allowing brands to optimise content before it's even launched. This enables brands to make more informed decisions for future briefs. This accountability of video performance is fundamental for justifying ROI and securing future budgets in the boardroom.

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# What's getting in the way?

Team structures and a lack of specialist skills can make it difficult to deliver solid video strategies. The responsibility for video marketing isn't always clear in traditional structures. Advertising, digital and PR teams often share the load, creating confusion and a lack of ownership.

This issue is reflected in agency selection too, resulting in disjointed creative and doubling up on briefs. Experience and skill can be an issue for marketing directors. They might not be as comfortable dealing with video as they are with TV, radio or print, so they default to these known channels in pressured times for fear of getting it wrong.

Unclear or unrealistic briefs make it difficult to plan the right content and distribution plan from the start. Irregular, ad-hoc content plans make it harder to build an audience, forcing you to start from scratch each time.

Being too safe and sticking to a formula that's worked for other channels can also limit success. Virgin shook up the image of boring airline safety videos with its 'Glee' style treatment. This created a more enjoyable passenger experience and high engagement levels, even for those watching it at home.

As a general rule, TV ads don't translate well to online video. They were created for a different purpose and a different viewing experience. Brands who simply stick their TV ads online, in place of a bespoke video strategy, are missing out.

Your video can work harder.

This white paper gives six clear actions you can take to boost the effectiveness of your video.

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It's difficult to imagine how much video actually exists. 300 hours are uploaded to YouTube every minute, to an audience of over a billion unique users every month - and that only accounts for 24% of all video views on the web.

It would take  
49 years, to  
watch the  
432,000 hours  
uploaded to You  
Tube daily.



**24%**

YouTube views

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# Six ways to supercharge your video strategy.

A more strategic approach to video, supported by solid briefing, will set you on the path to video success. Here are six actions you need to take if you're using video in your digital strategy.

### **1. Strong briefing**

A strong brief, with a clear challenge and objective, will produce the most effective work. Don't be tempted to prescribe solutions. Blendtec could have briefed the requirement for some 'how to' videos to educate consumers about the power of their blenders. Instead they created the famous 'Will it blend?' series. This was a highly engaging, shareable series of videos that delivered more impact and awareness than a spec-filled product video ever could.

### **2. Plan distribution from the outset**

Don't over invest in production and underinvest in distribution. Dove's Real Beauty Sketches didn't reach 114 million views in one month by chance.<sup>20</sup> Dove had a solid distribution and seeding plan, involving YouTube and Unruly.<sup>21</sup> The videos were also supported by outreach to publishers like Huffington Post and Mashable. This ensured the most relevant and influential people saw and shared the video in the first few days after launch, creating optimum awareness and buzz.

The first three days are key to driving shares for social video campaigns.<sup>22</sup> This is based on Unruly's Social Diffusion Curve, which tracks the average speed of video sharing for the most successful social videos.<sup>23</sup> To emphasise this effect, any paid media should be front weighted.

When creating your plan, be clear about your audience and what you want them to do. Specialist video advertising platforms, like Unruly, Teads and TubeMogul, can target specific audiences and distribute content across a wide network of publishers. This makes it easy to reach the right people in a relevant context. Views are usually bought on a cost per view (CPV) basis, ensuring you only pay when someone chooses to watch.

Influencer and blogger outreach is also a cost effective and credible way of distributing video. But the content must be strongly linked to the site and its audience's interests, to avoid appearing like an annoying 'ad'.

### **3.Design for the channel**

Consider how video is consumed on different platforms when designing a strategy.

Facebook auto-plays videos without sound. This means a strong opening three seconds, that doesn't rely on audio, is important.

Twitter can support TV advertising schedules with videos promoted to audiences who are likely to have seen the TV ad. Complementary videos should integrate creatively, but also offer additional value to the viewer so they're not just watching the same ad on a smaller screen.

Hulu allow viewers to choose which video ad to watch and many platforms run skippable ads. This underlines the importance of a compelling first few seconds.

Most video platforms offer sophisticated targeting opportunities. Creating tailored versions of the video for different interest groups can drive more engagement. Capturing shorter clips on a video shoot is an easy, cost-effective way of making content work harder on Twitter and Facebook, by creating something more native to the channel.

### **4. Be bold, think differently**

Creating something unexpected and different can be challenging, but much more likely to create buzz and sharability. Despite the millions of videos in existence, many only ever achieve a handful of views. Standing out from the crowd is essential.

Virgin America's 'Glee' style safety video and Blendtec's '*Will it blend?*' series are examples of brave, disruptive creative that none of their competitors had done before. Yet, they stay true to their core brand messages. It's important to push the creative boundaries, but remember what's unique about your brand and tell stories that only you can. Read more about this in *Stories that scale* ([brilliantnoise.com/storiesthatscale](http://brilliantnoise.com/storiesthatscale)).

Chipotle boldly invested in the production of a comedy series about industrial farming, available on Hulu, called '*Farmed and Dangerous*'.<sup>24</sup> The series subtly communicated its brand beliefs. This approach shows the infinite creative opportunities video offers - for those willing to take a risk.



## **5. Keep the conversation going**

A study by Pixability shows that the best-performing brands on YouTube publish high volumes of content on a regular basis.

A regular schedule of videos encourages audiences to return, as they know when to expect new content. GoPro and Jamie Oliver do this exceptionally well. Their audiences eagerly return to see new content on a daily or weekly basis.

Planning for a more even flow of video means you can distribute budgets to provide consistent support to all marketing activities. It also allows you to react to market changes or new product launches when needed.

A long term plan delivers economies of scale, if videos are produced together in batches or 'seasons'. The ability to test and learn will improve as more data is collected from a regular stream of content.

## **6. Test, learn and optimise**

Video is one of the few channels where testing and experimenting with creative ideas is achievable. This is due to the relatively low cost and volume of data available to analyse performance.

It's common practise for top video publishers to create multiple videos for each brief. This allows them to optimise towards the best performing one. It doesn't have to be a completely different video. Testing thumbnails, opening frames, music and CTAs can all refine the video, making it work harder.

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# Final word.

**Developing a brilliant video strategy isn't rocket science.  
But it does require commitment, creativity and a willingness to learn.**

Be clear about the role video can play for your brand. Make sure there is clear responsibility and resources in the team to develop and deliver the plan. Plan for distribution from the start, and don't stop once a video has launched. Learn from analytical insights and improve next time. Be creative and bold, useful and entertaining. Video is a powerful way to earn attention, but only if the audience is willing to watch it.

**Brilliant Noise:  
fast change, lasting impact.**

The digital revolution changes everything. It's the force driving shifts in markets, customers and organisations. Businesses face a dual challenge: staying ahead of the competition while transforming their own organisation.

We're a digital strategy agency. We create fast change with lasting impact in four critical, connected areas: experience, brand, content and culture. We do this through strategy and a bias for action.

Improvement in any of these areas delivers fast, measurable benefits, but we see the greatest impact when they're aligned and working together.

To find out how Brilliant Noise can help you see and make your future get in touch:

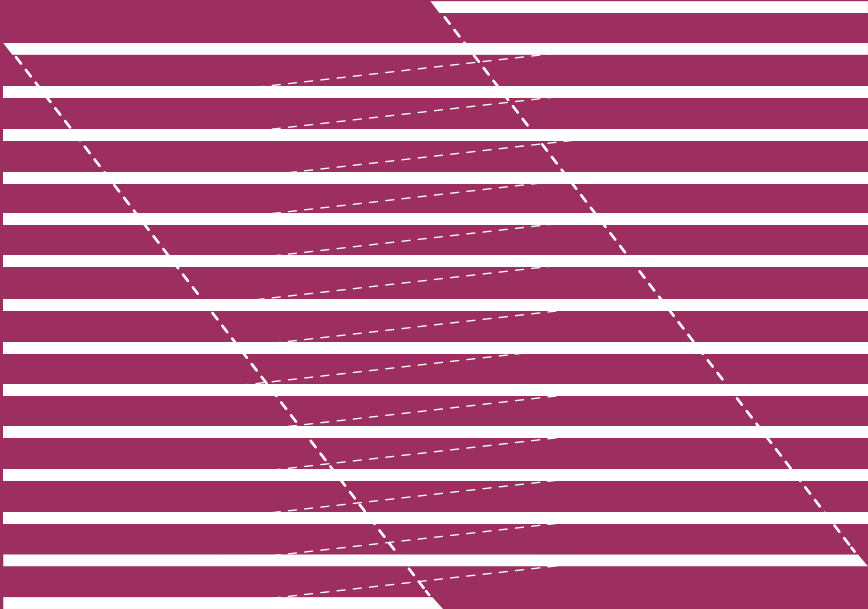
**hello@brilliantnoise.com**

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