

5 Fundamentals of video content planning you must follow to achieve your marketing goals



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You know you need video content as part of your marketing - but what comes next?

Maybe you're feeling excited, eager, but a little confused by the prospect of video. Or maybe you've tried video before, and it didn't quite meet your expectations.

Whatever your reservations, there's no reason why you can't use video to achieve your marketing goals, from converting leads to raising awareness.



There's just one thing to remember: you need to thoroughly **plan** video content before you jump right in. And planning for video is subtly different to planning for other types of content, with its own unique quirks to consider.

Without a doubt your video needs to be cost effective, impactful and results driven. None of that will be achievable unless you plan thoroughly first. In fact, most of the success of video content depends on the planning and pre-production stage, rather than the production itself.

You'd be surprised how many experienced marketers fall at this first hurdle. Luckily, with some forethought you can become an Olympic hurdler of the video marketing world. We're here to guide you through the whole process.

Our simple steps to video-planning heaven

- 1 Outline your objectives
- 2 Get insights into your target audience
- 3 Focus on your core message
- 4 Plan the specifics
- 5 Write a video production brief

Step One

Outline your objectives

The decision to produce video content is always exciting. Don't let the sexy allure of the medium distract you from thoughtful planning of what exactly your video needs to achieve. Without this crucial step you'll struggle to report on your successes further down the line, or even understand what they are.

Analyse your situation and identify the problem

When you first realised you needed video in your marketing strategy, what problem or issue were you looking to solve? This nugget of thought is a great place to start when setting out your objectives.

For example, say you're an advertising agency. Let's call you **You've Been Ad**. You use an inbound marketing strategy to generate new leads. Maybe you're getting lots of traffic to your landing pages, but not many visitors are actually downloading the eBooks you have on offer. They're not converting into leads.

So you decide to use a series of videos to increase the conversion rate on your landing pages. Great – there's your situation and the specific problem you're using video to solve.

Place your objectives in the wider context

Building on the problem you've identified, what objectives does your video need to hit? It's also time to consider your wider business goals and how your video will help achieve them. The more clarity you can get on your objectives, the easier the rest of the whole process will become.

Back to our advertising agency You've Been Ad. As a clever and forward-thinking business, it will build its video objectives based on its wider goals.

This one in particular:

This year our business will increase its leads by 500

The main objective for their new video content might be:

In one month our videos will increase the number of first-time visitors who download an eBook by 50%

So the objective for You've Been Ad's video content won't just solve the initial problem that was identified, but will also help towards the bigger goals of the whole company.

Download our video objectives template for a simple format to set out your goals

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How will you measure the success of your project?

Next up, you need to decide what success looks like for your video content.

Imagine we've jumped forward in time and you've already got your exciting new video content. It meets all of your objectives – brilliant! But take a step back: exactly what metrics or KPIs have you been tracking, and how, to allow you to confidently say that your objectives have been met? We want to cement these exact figures now.

Your objectives will greatly influence the metrics you'll need to measure the success of your video content. It should be obvious just from looking at your objectives what you'll be measuring.

You've Been Ad's objective for its video content is:

 *In one month our videos will increase the number of first-time visitors who download an eBook by 50%*

You've Been Ad currently gets 30 first-time visitors a month who download an eBook from one of their three landing pages. In order to meet their video content objectives, specifically they will be looking for 45 first-time visitors to download an eBook in one month. You've Been Ad knows it can easily track this metric with the marketing tools it already has.

But what if You've Been Ad also had a second objective for their video content?

 *Over three months our videos will all achieve an engagement rate of at least 60%*

That means, on average, viewers will watch 60% of a video. But in this case, You've Been Ad doesn't have the audience retention tools necessary to track how long visitors watch its videos. Most video hosting platforms, like Wistia, Brightcove, Vidyard and YouTube, do offer these engagement and retention statistics, but make sure you know exactly how you'll measure success so you can pick the right platform later. By planning in advance you can secure the tools you need before your video content goes live.

Get key stakeholders involved early

We've all got 'em – stakeholders who need to be kept happy. Everybody's got an opinion when it comes to video, whether it's the company directors or the cleaner, and you better believe they're going to voice them.

Bring in your most important stakeholders as early on in the project as possible. For a lot of people video is a big deal, and you'll want your key stakeholders to feel like they have a say in what's happening from the very beginning (whether they need to sign off on the project or not). How you involve them will depend on your business and its structure, but make sure there's a process you can follow.

If this means You've Been Ad has to get the business owner on board with the objectives and KPIs of their video content before they can move forward, then so be it – it'll save a lot of costly and time-consuming errors down the road. ▼

Step Two

Get insights into your target audience

The next key step in planning any kind of content is deciding who exactly you're trying to reach. For video, you should focus on unearthing insights about your target audience that allow you to really connect with them.

Who are you talking to?

You know the drill – decide who you want to watch your video content, and what defines that audience. If you use buyer personas in your marketing, they're an ideal place to start.

Odds are, your video target audience may be one or more of your buyer personas (but don't assume they'll align – they won't always). For You've Been Ad, the video content to be put on their landing pages will be targeted at and watched by brand managers looking for advice on how to best advertise a brand. They also happen to be the agency's primary buyer persona.

Personas are a useful stepping stone that describe an average person in your audience, leading you to insights – or deeper observations – about the people you're targeting. Insights are like the gold dust of successful video content. Once you've got one, you'll know how to really affect and engage with your target audience so you can compel them to think a certain way or take a certain action.

Discover an insight about your target audience



So what exactly are insights? An insight about your target audience is a deep understanding into a human behaviour or attitude. It's generally a logical extension of the more obvious things you already know about the audience, like their demographics, occupation and values, but which reveals something about why they feel or act a particular way.

Basically, an insight tells you what drives your target audience. You'll know once you hit upon an insight because you'll feel like a genius professor who's discovered the solution to an unsolved equation (at least, that's what it's like for us).

An example: at You've Been Ad, their primary persona is brand managers. The target audience for the video content on their eBook landing pages is brand managers who are looking for advice on new ways to advertise their brand, considering budget and deadline constraints.

Target Audience

Here's what **You've Been Ad** knows about their target audience so far (based on that primary persona):

-  *They are brand managers*
-  *They are in their 30s, 40s or 50s*
-  *They work for large companies with one or more well-known brands*
-  *In their roles they must maintain the appearance and appeal of their brand with the limited resources available*
-  *They read high-level educational blogs and eBooks to help them in their job*
-  *They watch informative videos in blog posts and on LinkedIn at work*
-  *They are organised, analytical and eager to deliver results*
-  *They don't have time for flashy campaigns that don't help them achieve brand objectives*

Based on this information, You've Been Ad strikes on insight gold. They realise that their target audience doesn't care about creativity, uniqueness or artsy advertising, unless concrete results are delivered as a result.

Specifically, they're tired of advertising agencies who show off their ingenuity or innovation without proving they can also help them meet their goals. Eureka!

Instead of producing video content stressing the creative new advertising ideas in their eBooks, You've Been Ad will focus on how readers can use brand advertising to achieve their objectives.

There you have it. With your insight into your target audience, you can produce video content that speaks to the right people in a way that resonates deeply with them.

Remember it's about your audience, not you

Would you rather watch a video that speaks to your current needs, wants, and challenges, or would you rather watch a video that's all about the company who produced it? Exactly.

Don't do that to your viewers. As we always say, you don't want to 'we' all over them.

Keep in mind your target audience at all times, and what they want to watch. You'll need to produce your video content based on their desires and their difficulties, the benefits they'll get from your products or services, and what contact they've previously had with your business, brand, or offering.

Don't forget that context is everything. Consider your customer journey, and where in that process your video will be watched. To successfully engage its audience, video content being watched on YouTube by potential leads will be vastly different to video content sent out to key company clients.

If you can tap into what will appeal to your audience (and this is where your insight comes into play) then you'll have far greater success in keeping them hooked. ▼

Step Three

Focus on your core message


It's all well and good knowing the objectives and target audience for your video content, but that means nothing if you don't have a core message.

What do you want your audience to feel, think and do?

First of all, take a minute to consider how your audience will affect your video objectives.


In order to meet your objectives, how should your video content make your target audience feel? What should they think when watching it? And what action, if any, do you want them to take afterwards? This is what your core message ultimately rests on.


Here's a reminder of You've Been Ad's video objective:

 *In one month our videos will increase the number of first-time visitors who download an eBook by 50%*

Keeping this objective in mind, the target audience for the new video content will ideally:

 *FEEL: intrigued, impressed and eager to learn more*

 *THINK: that they want to use You've Been Ad's eBooks to help them meet their goals*

 *DO: download one or more of our eBooks*

Work out the one thing your audience should know


If your audience only took one message away from your video content, what would you want it to be?

It can be a dangerous temptation to try and cram in as much information and as many messages as possible. But this will only dilute the things you're trying to say and make your video less effective.

You want to focus on one core message. What is it vital for your audience to know, based on what you want that video content to achieve? What message will encourage them to feel, think and do what you want them to?

You've Been Ad want their videos to increase the number of first-time visitors to their website who download an eBook by 50%. They also want to use the insight they gained into brand marketers to connect with that audience and encourage them to download one or more of their eBooks.

So they decide on the core message:

 *You've Been Ad's eBooks teach you how to successfully use brand advertising to achieve your marketing objectives*

That's a great core message. It's simple, relates to the target audience, and compels them to take action.

You can have multiple core messages in a piece of video content, but don't get too carried away. Each additional message you include needs extra work to make sure it doesn't get lost. Most importantly, there's no point in adding extra core messages if they don't help you to achieve your video objectives. They'll only make your job harder.

Remember that the best videos usually take a single, clear message and deliver it well.

Use a message map for supporting detail

You might have seen the video explaining how to use message maps from American author and speaker Carmine Gallo. If not, we recommend you click on that play button and give it a watch.



How to use message maps

A message map is a very simple, very powerful tool to help you get your core message across in any medium. For each major message you want to convey, draw a map of three to four sub-messages around it that support and reinforce the core message.

Our friends at You've Been Ad might build their message map like this:



If you want, you can then add supporting details (like statistics or examples) to those sub-messages. The idea is that you can explain the entire message map in as much or as little time as you have.

This method works like a dream with video content. Because a message map is so flexible, as long as you keep to it you'll be supporting your core message – no matter how simple or complex your message, or how long or short your video. ▼

Step Four

Plan the specifics

Once you've decided on your objectives, your audience and your core message, the hardest part is over. Take a moment to congratulate yourself. The next step is planning the more logistical aspects of producing video content.

Are you producing internally or externally?

Now you need to decide where you'll be producing your video content.

If you have the skills in-house you might want to get hands-on with video yourself. Filming a simple 'talking head' shot (a single person facing the camera) is relatively easy if you have suitable equipment and somebody who can edit the footage.

But – and this is a big but – you'll already need a fair amount of experience producing video content to get the most professional and effective results.

In most circumstances we recommend you use an experienced video agency to handle your video production, who'll be able to offer you much more in terms of expertise, execution and equipment. And if you think you'll need highly polished video content to appeal to your target audience or tell your core message (maybe with clever visual effects, editing and sound design) then an agency is a must.

A good video agency will also give you guidance on the production of your video content according to your objectives, audience, and core messages. And a **really** good video agency will work with you through your objectives, audience and core messages to help your business achieve its goals.

The advice and fresh perspective of a good video agency can be invaluable. Bring them into the process as early as possible and let them help you with every step. After all, they're the experts.

How are you using and repurposing your videos?

So, where exactly will your videos be watched? Where will you be placing them online (or offline)?

Your choices should build on your objectives and what you've already found out about your target audience. Think about how they spend time watching videos and how you can reach them. There's no point producing an incredible video if it doesn't get seen by the right people.


Let's check up on You've Been Ad. The target audience for their video content is brand managers who want to meet marketing goals with their brand advertising. Because the objectives and target audience for the videos have already been thought about, it's clear where You've Been Ad will use them: on their eBook landing pages.

The video content will encourage brand managers to convert by downloading an eBook. Plus, we know brand managers will view it because we already know they search out educational eBooks.


Next, you'll need to think about how you can repurpose your video content. We don't need to tell you to maximise ROI – as a marketer that's in your blood. Just keep in mind that one video isn't likely to be relevant on every channel and every platform without some changes. The right distribution for the right content should come before unnecessary reuse every time.

You've Been Ad know their video content will be placed on their eBook landing pages. They decide to reuse the videos as part of a series of educational blog posts to channel additional new visitors to their eBook offers, because they know brand managers also read informative blogs at work.

Let's remind ourselves of the objective for the video content:

 *In one month our videos will increase the number of first-time visitors who download an eBook by 50%*

As well as the core message:

 *You've Been Ad's eBooks teach you how to successfully use brand advertising to achieve your marketing objectives*



Using the videos as part of blog posts will redirect new visitors to the eBook landing pages, helping towards the video objective. But if exactly the same video is used in the blog posts as is placed on the landing pages, we're probably going to run into trouble.

Think about it this way: any calls to action at the end of the video may feel less powerful or relevant if the video is placed in a blog post and visitors have to click through before reaching an eBook landing page. Not only that, visitors taking a journey from the blog post to the landing page could view the video twice. Obviously a jarring user experience is something we want to avoid at all costs.

The solution? A separate ending with a different call to action could be used for the video when it's placed in the blog posts. Or a shorter preview version of the video could be cut for use outside of the landing pages.

This is why planning is key – you should anticipate whether you'll need to produce extra endings or variations of your video based on where it's distributed. You'll thank yourself when it comes to production.

What's your budget and timescale?

You probably can't give specific figures. But whether you're producing your video content internally or externally, having a rough idea of how much you can spend and when you need your videos by will be massively helpful down the line.

If you are working with a video agency, they'll love you for your forethought (trust us on this one!). Knowing your likely budget from the start means they'll be able to help you meet your objectives with the resources you actually have.

It can be hard to not overstretch yourself when it comes to video. Lean on your agency when it comes to budget and timescale, so you don't overestimate how much you'll be able to do with a set amount of money and time. Also, don't forget the value video will add to your business, not only through its direct objectives but also as a reusable resource. If you can wrangle the extra budget then we recommend you take it.

Now hold your horses

Your work through the steps to video success so far may well have sparked your imagination. Are you envisioning how your videos are going to look? Are you getting excited about exactly how many you'll produce, and how long they're going to be?

If so, stop.

It can feel perfectly natural to race off at this point, but the most important part of the planning process is yet to come. It might be helpful to begin looking at your competitors for sources of inspiration, but don't stray any further into creative ideas just yet.

If you've decided to use one, a good video agency will guide you through the entire creative process and help you to decide exactly what type of video content will achieve your objectives. But there's no point in rushing ahead without having completed the last, and most important, step of the planning process. ▼

Step Five

Write a video production brief

It's the final countdown now, so grab onto your air guitars. The last thing you need to do is take all of the thinking and planning you've done up to this point and condense it into a single document: your video production brief.

Use the brief as a tool to hone all your planning

The brief won't contain any new information, which means you don't need to consider anything that you haven't already considered at this point. What you do need to do is imagine the brief as a tool used to turn the blunt instrument of your planning into a sharp, certain point.

Your video production brief will help you to clarify all of the decisions you've made so far. Are your objectives achievable? Are you definitely focusing on the right core message for your target audience? This is the time for a final assessment and analysis of your planning.

Be detailed, decisive and ruthless

Remember that the brief will likely be the first thing a video agency or internal production team knows about your video content, and should tell them everything they need to know about what you want from your videos, and why.

Your brief should be as detailed as you feel it needs to be, but don't be afraid to cut unnecessary or conflicting information. It's actually a good idea to go through it with a red pen and a ruthless glint in your eye. Make sure your brief accurately represents all of your planning, because in the end your video will only ever be as good as the brief it came from. ▼

Download our video production brief template for a clear format to display your planning

[DOWNLOAD NOW](#) 



Summary: the 5 fundamentals of video content planning

1 Outline your objectives

- ▼ Analyse your situation and identify the problem
- ▼ Place your objectives in the wider context
- ▼ How will you measure the success of your project?
- ▼ Get key stakeholders involved early

2 Get insights into your target audience

- ▼ Who are you talking to?
- ▼ Discover an insight about your target audience
- ▼ Remember it's about your audience, not you

3 Get insights into your target audience

- ▼ What do you want your audience to think, feel and do?
- ▼ Work out the one thing your audience should know
- ▼ Use a message map for supporting detail

4 Plan the specifics

- ▼ Are you producing internally or externally?
- ▼ How are you using and repurposing your videos?
- ▼ What's your budget and timescale?

5 Write a video production brief

- ▼ Use the video production brief as a tool to hone all your planning
- ▼ Be detailed, decisive and ruthless

Those were the 5 fundamentals of video content planning, and now you've mastered them you're one step closer to producing cost-effective, results-driven, exceptionally fine video content.

Need Help? Click here to get a quote...

How can we help you?

We're always happy to answer questions and chat about new projects. Tell us what's next for your business and we'll show you how video can help you get there.

Call us on
0845 003 7720

Or if you prefer to type, email us at
hello@skeletonproductions.com

www.skeletonproductions.com

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