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STRATEGIES FOR DISTRIBUTING ONLINE VIDEO CONTENT



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Innovative brand content must have a smart distribution strategy behind it. Otherwise, you won't reach the mass audience it deserves.

As more of a brand's audience is scattered across the Web, seeking out that audience across channels and over time is key. Just trying to pull them into one location won't bring the results you want.

That's not to say a destination isn't necessary. But it's more important than ever to ensure that people can consume your content how, when, and where they want. And the social Web demands that it's shareable.

The industry has come a long way over the last year. While viral still pops up in every other brand brief, brand content distribution strategies have become much more sophisticated -- and nurturing your content push and pull across the Web is an art form all in itself. To build the right strategy, you must know your options.

In upcoming columns, I'll dig deeper into several creative distribution options and interview some key players in the space. To start, here's a brief overview of available distribution choices.

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Seeding and Nurturing Your Content

Seeding and nurturing content is the first step in creating a successful distribution strategy and managing your audience. There are many paid and organic options; which way you go depends on your internal resources.

A typical seeding plan has four steps:

- Decide what video portals you want to be on. There are many options beyond YouTube.
- Choose a username and a design style or color palette that will be consistent across channel properties. Don't be lazy -- creating a unique cross channel online presence can go a long way.
- Develop an upload schedule and start posting! A couple weeks before your first show upload, use a teaser video to promote the show and destination. This also gives you a way to see what seeding properties are most interested in your content and can help you optimize early on.
- Once your program has begun, nurture the properties you exist on. That means monitoring conversations around your content and even responding to people's comments.

Content Partner's Network

In some cases, your content partner will already have an audience. For instance, if you're working with a video blogger on YouTube to create new content on behalf of your brand, she will likely have an effective distribution plan to reach fans. Don't reinvent the wheel. Instead, harness your partner's enthusiasm and compensate them appropriately for the audience they reach.

The same is true when working with a digital studio releasing the second season of an online show. The studio most likely distributes content across its favorite networks and has a cross-channel presence. Once you know what your partner's distribution plan is, augment it with your strategy.

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In-Page Distribution

Ad networks of the past are becoming the future's content distribution pipelines. Companies like Adconion Media Group and Tremor Media are paving the way for the creative use of in-page full video stream experiences. Win attention by having your content exist on Web sites where there isn't any other video. You can even dynamically update that content as well as serve multiple clips in one unit.

Contextual Distribution

Similar to how Google's AdSense network works, you can also serve up full episodes of brand content through Google's video advertising solution. Not only will people be able to find your content when they're most predisposed to it, but like in-page distribution, your videos will often have the advantage of being the only video on the site.

Personal On Demand

No matter where and how people find your content, ensure it's easy for them to find that content again. That means allowing people to subscribe through RSS, and/or download and subscribe with players like Apple's iTunes or Miro.

In addition, brand utility widget formats allow full mini-destination experiences to be grabbed and embedded on social networks. It's not difficult to add these small details to your distribution plan. Easy options for viewers can help extend engagement and reach.

Search and Video Search

Every brand content plan should have a search strategy to increase discoverability. In addition to creating a successful SEO (define) strategy, it's also important to ensure your content is optimized for video search engines and easy to find within video portal verticals. A mega video search site, Blinx, even has guidelines and a community wiki to help brand content creators maximize their results.

P2P Distribution

Statistics coming out of P2P (define) last year are a bit mind boggling, albeit, perhaps the source is a bit biased. Nevertheless, a large percentage of online video users are consuming content through P2P downloading. And that's not going to change anytime soon.

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Media partners like Tremor Media offer options that will make your content more discoverable when people search for P2P video downloads and podcasts on platforms like Vuze, uTorrent, and Limewire.

Similar to search, you can purchase keywords that will guarantee increased discoverability and in turn, downloads -- made possible through technologies originally created by companies like Media Defender to find illegal downloads.

Don't abuse P2P options. Over the years, some advertisers have been more inclined to abuse these technologies with spam versus actually offering compelling content.