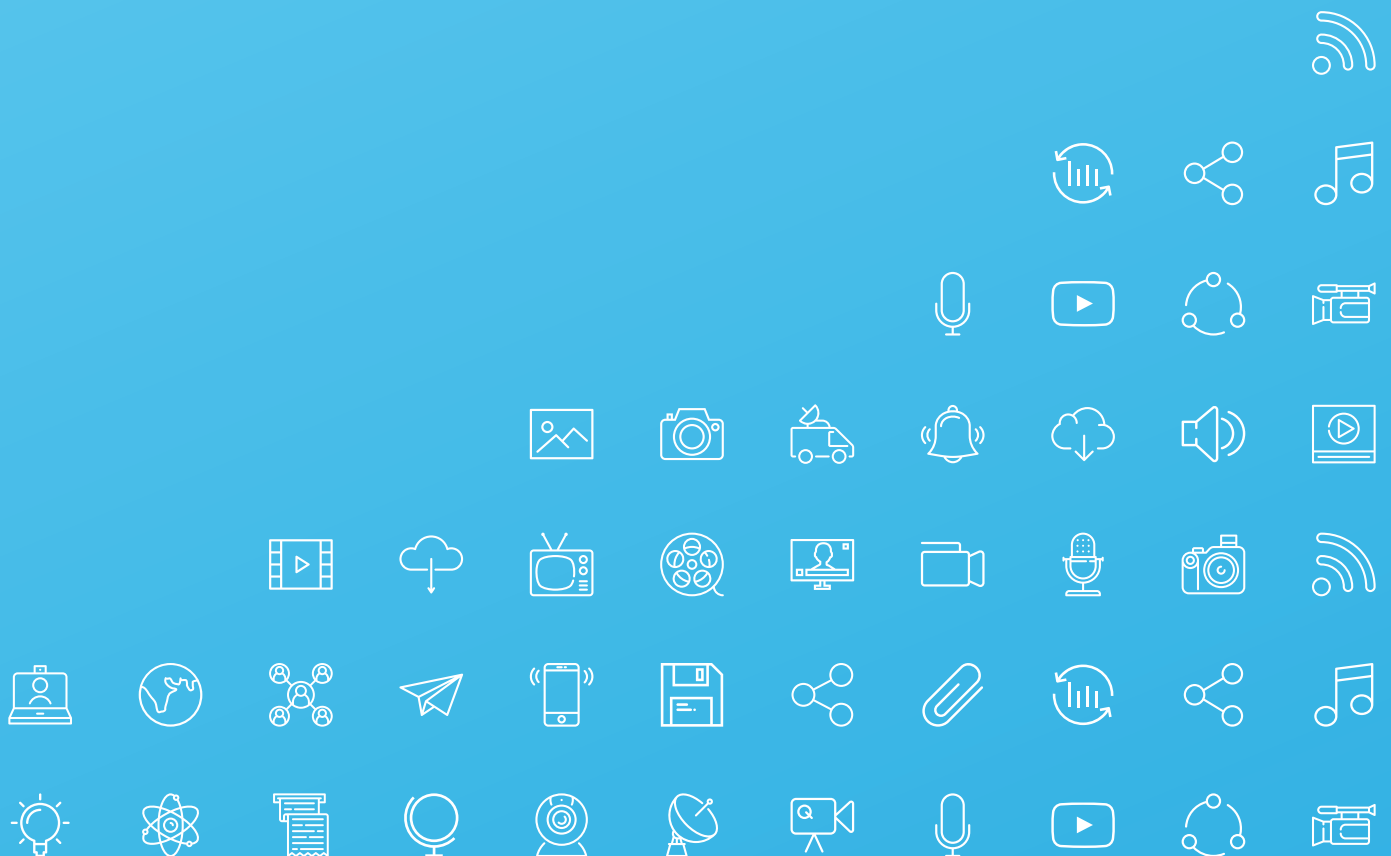


THE POWER OF VIDEO IN PR AND COMMS

HOW COMMUNICATORS AND JOURNALISTS USE VIDEO TO TELL THEIR STORIES





Summary



In this White Paper, we analyse the power and potential of video as a communications tool.



We look at the PR industry's ongoing reaction and adaptation to the rapid growth of video content, and try to understand how and why – from social media-focused viral videos to targeted, exclusive film screenings – communicators use video to meet the business needs of their brands and clients.



Agency and in-house PR and comms practitioners talk about their experience with the medium and their approach towards video. They tell us how they create it, the type of video content they produce and how they distribute it. Industry leaders tell us about video and media relations, the kind of video content journalists are asking for and their growing involvement in paid media.



In addition, journalists tell Gorkana about the kind of video content that they want to receive, what their readers or viewers enjoy and how they work with brands to create and publish the best quality video.



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Introduction



Video has always been a powerful and popular medium, both culturally and commercially, but it is the digitisation of media and – most recently – the widespread adoption of mobile devices, that have made video a preferred means of communication.



Marketing consultancy Digital Sherpa reports that one-third of all online activity is spent watching video. Everyday 100 million internet users watch at least one video online. It also notes that, while only 20% of readers will finish an article, 80% of viewers will watch a video through to its end.



YouTube statistics show that the video-streaming and sharing platform is the second biggest search engine in the world. It has over a billion users, for the last three years watch time is up at least 50% year on year, and more than half of YouTube views now come from mobile devices.



The media is adapting to feed the public's appetite for video, delivering more of its news and stories in a video format. While print circulation continues to drop at a rapid rate (The Guardian reported that the total number of print national newspapers sold between March 2014 and March 2015 fell 7.6%) online publishers flourish. Its potential for video is one of online publishing's advantages and, as more newspapers and magazines either move or expand their presence online, demand for high quality video content can only increase.



In light of these changes, communicators are now integrating video, particularly mobile-ready video, into their communications and media relations campaigns and strategies in order to better engage with, and influence, their audiences.



Those who work in public relations, as a whole, understand that there's potential in video; there's an unmatched opportunity to engage people emotionally, and convey a complex message simply and quickly. However, due to the rapidly changing nature of the medium, there continues to be confusion around video production, distribution, how to create video that achieves business goals and how to prove that success to clients.



How and why top communicators use video

Gorkana asks comms industry leaders why they use video, and why they think communicators are well placed to provide their clients with video content. The PR professionals agree on video's shareability and the format's ability to tell an engaging story.



Alastair Turner
CEO
Aspectus

"Effective communications is no longer about column inches, old fashioned breakfast briefings in stuffy hotels or one-on-one product demos. In their place has come smart, spreadable content.

"PR is now about creating, sharing, driving and measuring traffic flows. In the end, this is more or less the only way you can change attitudes and behaviour using PR in today's world, and video plays a massive role in achieving this aim."



Nat Coombs
founder and MD
Me:Mo Interactive

"Stories can be enhanced with video, but in various ways, not just directly relating to the primary focus of the article. So for example, there may be a news story about Cristiano Ronaldo winning the Ballon d'Or, but the video that is embedded in the piece is not footage of him receiving the award, or a reporter filing a piece from the awards ceremony, but a 90-second motion graphic explainer on Ronaldo and his career to date.

"That's key - videos need to have editorial value. I think a mistake some PRs make is to shoot what is essentially a promo film, then try and get it placed. It's an ad - why would a title run an ad as editorial?"



Robert Anderson
executive director of content marketing
Good Relations

“The real power of video is when it’s irresistibly shareable, and that’s all about creating authentic engagement. PRs have always specialised in developing earned relationships, so that we know how to produce relevant and topical video for organic take-up. We can’t rely on paid media space for reach - we produce content that has to stand on its own legs and is carried by the power of our influencer relationships.”



Ben Mason
head of social
Unity

“Video is currently the most effective form of telling a story - of a brand, of a campaign or of an individual or third party organisation that you are featuring for whatever reason. Comms teams and agencies have (arguably!) always had the best storytelling expertise and continue to have the most experience of asking: why is this interesting? How can we make it more so? And do we need to ditch it if it doesn’t pass the ‘who cares’ test, with or without media money behind it?”





In-house case study: Direct Line



Gareth Andrews
Direct Line Group



Watch the Christmas turkey-mergency service video at: <http://bit.ly/2d8Hgwb>

Gareth Andrews, social media editor at Direct Line Group, shares his experiences in creating content and implementing a video strategy for the wider UK insurance company while aligning its brands. He also looks to the future of video and what that will mean for the group.

What is Direct Line Group's approach to video content as a comms/PR tool?

Video has moved on significantly in the past 18 months. Faster mobile connection speeds mean it is easier than ever to live stream video on the go. Facebook and Twitter are heavily investing in live streaming, 16 to 24-year-olds watch more VOD and YouTube than other age demographics - and all ages are watching more YouTube and on-demand content.

Against that backdrop, it's vital that brands don't just rely on the 'do a story and have an accompanying video' approach. Yes, media organisations still love a great piece of content, but a lot depends on what your overall objective is. If it's PR coverage, then the video needs to be tailored in this way. If it's to engage a social audience and generate

engagement, then that means a separate edit. More often than not, the PR and social elements are intertwined within production.

At Direct Line Group, our approach is to start with the strategy first and ensure that any video activity clearly fits into the brand's strategic direction. This allows us to be flexible with formatting and distribution, but still true and effective for the brand.



Watch the "worst football team in England" at: <http://bit.ly/2d8IYNU>

How do you source your video content?

Sourcing video content varies according to project and cost. One thing brands and PRs need to understand is that video content is not cheap to make. Even if you're producing the content in-house and using free tools, the planning and production time comes at a cost of man hours. So there's a call you have to make: do you use your agencies, in-house or contract out for specific projects?

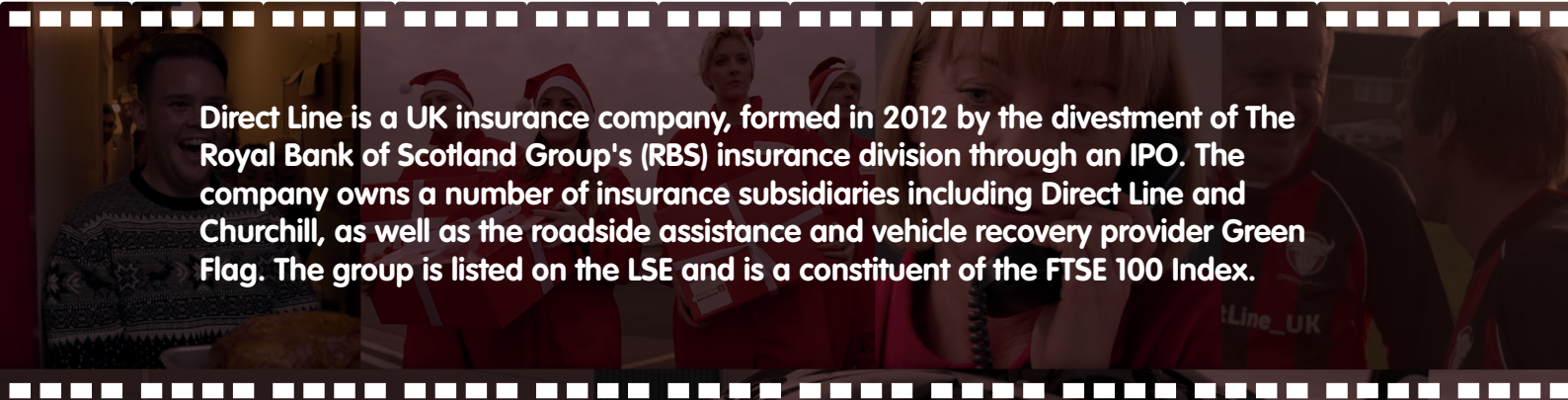
If possible, it makes sense to look either in-house or to your main creative agencies, which is the approach we take at Direct Line Group. The more stakeholders you have producing video, the more you risk an inconsistency in the tone, look and feel of your final productions.

How do you see your organisation's relationship with video changing in years to come?

Video capability and usage have accelerated rapidly over the past two years and, as a brand, we have to adapt to a more video-centric, and largely mobile-centric, consumer base. Chiefly, that means our relationship with video should change according to the needs of our customers, as well as developments media owners make available.

Many of the social channels are pushing live streaming in a big way, for example, and we've got to consider if this is something we also want to invest in.

However, just because the technology or platforms are available, it doesn't mean we should immediately put all our efforts into the next big thing. At Direct Line Group, we've undertaken a number of industry firsts across social, content and video, but we also want to get the best ROI.



Direct Line is a UK insurance company, formed in 2012 by the divestment of The Royal Bank of Scotland Group's (RBS) insurance division through an IPO. The company owns a number of insurance subsidiaries including Direct Line and Churchill, as well as the roadside assistance and vehicle recovery provider Green Flag. The group is listed on the LSE and is a constituent of the FTSE 100 Index.

How are PR teams producing video?

PR consultancies differ greatly in their approach to video production - while some produce all of their content in-house others prefer to use freelancers or outsource to digital teams. Gorkana asks agency leaders how they meet their client's demand for video.



Shannon Peerless
head of PR
10 Yetis Digital

"To keep costs down for clients and to ensure we retain complete control over the quality of the video projects we carry out, we do everything **in-house**.

"We've invested in the very best filming and editing equipment and we have a purpose-built studio in our offices. All the kit is mobile, so we can go out and film on location too. It's very important to be flexible for clients."



Colin Cather
creative director
Bottle

"We create animation and film **in-house**, with our own design team up-close and integrated. They learn the boundaries and freedoms of brand expression, and help to educate the client about the art of the possible. As we create the content here, it means we can turn around an idea faster."



Ben Mason
head of social
Unity

"Our **in-house** creative team will create the quick reactive content, but for bigger assets we have a portfolio of trusted third party **production companies** that we work closely with from ideation through to final polishing."



Robert Anderson
executive director of
content marketing
Good Relations

"We've already built a specialist content marketing practice with full service expertise. Our strategy team has developed a proprietary planning methodology to reveal the insights that underpin our creative ideas.

"We've then built our own **in-house** creative studio, which does everything from shoots to animation. We also launched our specialist broadcast media consultancy this year, Good Broadcast, which specialises in editorial broadcast programming."



In-house case study: Goodyear - launching the eagle

Goodyear brought PR agency Bottle on board and tasked it with developing a creative and innovative campaign to launch its Eagle F1 Asymmetric 3 product and promote the wider Eagle tyre range. The video-led campaign raised brand awareness and reinforced Goodyear's values through an artistic idea with a focus on social sharing.

Client: Goodyear **PR Team:** Bottle **Timing:** Video launch date - April 29, 2016

Objectives:

Goodyear asked Bottle to: "Make our new tyre famous". It wanted to generate publicity for the Eagle F1 Asymmetric 3 product, as well as the wider Eagle tyre range.

Goodyear asked for a strategy that would reflect its 'made to feel good' brand positioning and creativity ethos. Bottle sought to drive engagement across Goodyear's website and social channels, especially on Facebook, through a video-led campaign.

Strategy and implementation:

The target audience for the Eagle campaign was male, in their late 20s to 40s and classed as AB1. It's seen as an image conscious group, in general, that values craft and 'experiential discovery'.

To capture attention, engage the viewer and encourage sharing, Bottle used video to create a campaign it hoped would be emotive, communicating originality, creativity and memorability.

Bottle partnered with UK artist Ian Cook, to create an original artwork using the new tyre as a tool. Wes West, Bottle's creative content lead, oversaw the two-day filming process. The tyres were captured in time-lapse motion and edited into a one-minute video to culminate in a 'big reveal' ending.

Social channels and 'shareability' were important elements in the content-driven campaign and the final video edit was hosted on Goodyear's Facebook, Twitter and YouTube channels, as well as the brand's publishing hub, HugTheRoads.com. All posts included a call to action.



Watch the Goodyear video at:
<http://bit.ly/2cX8UxD>

Results:

A plan was set up for real-time monitoring throughout the four-week Eagle campaign, and underperforming aspects were cut ensuring continual optimisation. Paid activity on Twitter and YouTube, as well as media outreach, was also closely monitored.

The video was picked up and covered by publications including the BBC, The Drum and LBBonline.com. Goodyear's video was viewed nearly one million times in the first two weeks, and the campaign reached over two and a half million people in its first month.

The Eagle F1 Asymmetric 3 product page received a 77% increase in visitors on launch day, with 12% of visitors coming directly from Facebook. In addition, Goodyear's Facebook channel received a 175% increase in daily page likes on launch date, and 880 new page likes in the first four-week period as a direct result of the Eagle campaign.

Gorkana's top tips for creating great video

- 01 Create value for the publication or distributor and, most importantly, for the viewer
- 02 The video should sit within a wider strategy, and should not be stand-alone
- 03 The video strategy should be formed around wider business' goals
- 04 The style of the video should be in-keeping with the brand persona
- 05 Be innovative – the way that people engage with video is changing
- 06 As in any campaign, costs need to be justified through effective monitoring and measurement
- 07 If the goal is for the video to be shared, it needs to have a story, however brief
- 08 Don't force it, not every brand or campaign will require a video element

A man with a beard, wearing a denim shirt, is leaning over a table and looking at a tablet. In the background, other people are seated at a table in a meeting room with large windows. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting an evening or indoor lighting.

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Campaign case study: MSD Animal Health - The Big Tick Project

Shout Communications and MSD Animal Health used video, research and influencers to raise awareness of the danger posed by ticks. The campaign led to increased sales of Bravecto, the tick prevention product.

Client: MSD Animal Health **PR Team:** Shout! Communications **Timing:** June 2015

Budget: £14,500 (for the broadcast element)

Objectives:

MSD Animal Health asked Shout! Communications to engage with veterinary professionals and dog owners, and make them aware of the risks associated with ticks and tick-borne diseases. Shout! Communications was also asked to drive sales of Bravecto - a product for dogs which protects them from ticks, and is only available from veterinary practices - by 50%.

Strategy and implementation:

Amid concerns that the tick population in the UK is rising, with an associated rise in risk from tick-borne illness - such as Lyme disease - in both people and animals, MSD Animal Health began working with the University of Bristol to develop the Big Tick Project.

Shout! Communications began working on the Big Tick Project halfway through the 18-month long campaign, when an increase in momentum at the start of the 2016 tick season was required.

The video content was filmed in Essex, where two cases of the potentially fatal tick-borne disease, Babesiosis had recently been discovered. Footage featured Chris Packham, the TV presenter and campaign spokesperson, a tick expert from the University of Bristol, a dog which had been infected by Babesiosis and an Essex vet who had recently diagnosed the first cases of Babesiosis in the UK.

Results:

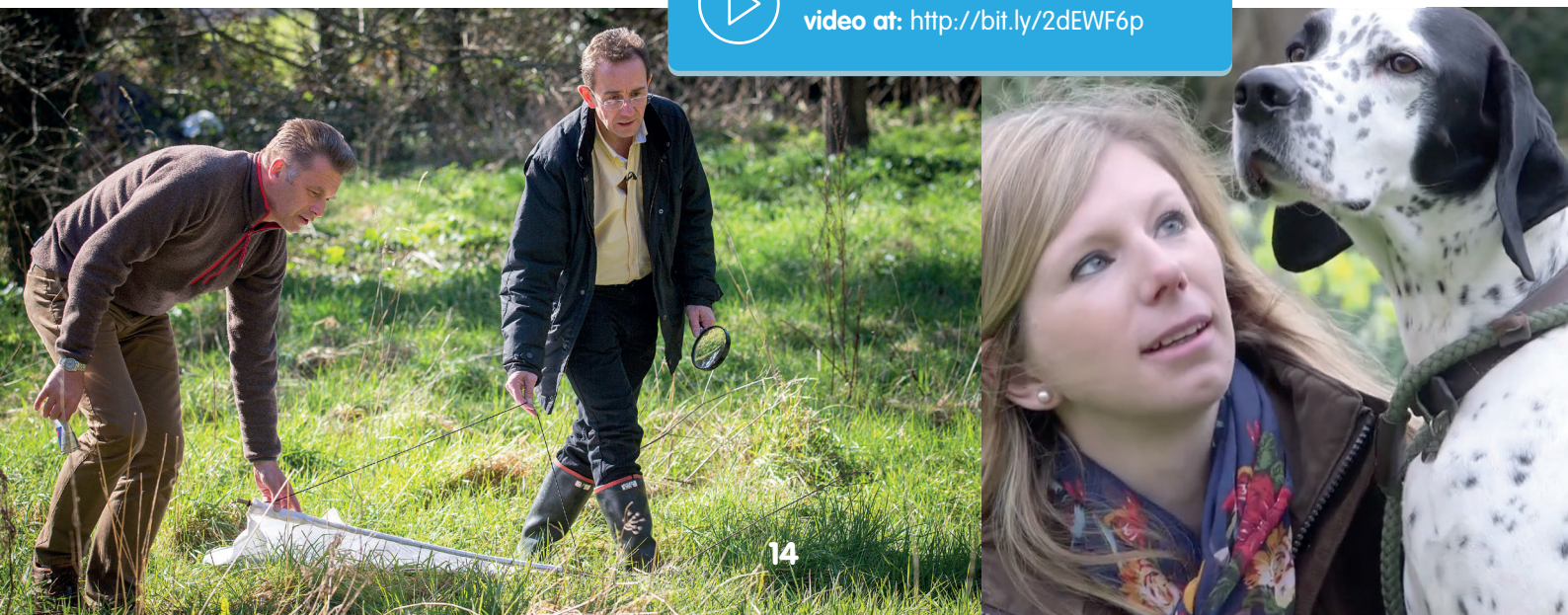
The B-roll was distributed to national and regional broadcasters, the online video package was successfully placed on mainstream and specialist websites and a more tailored package, featuring Chris Packham talking directly to vets, went to surgeries throughout the UK.

Coverage included mentions on three national news programmes, three regional news bulletins, 24 radio stations and eight websites, including the Mail Online and the Express Online, who used the video package.

Reported results included an 82% increase in Bravecto sales – surpassing the 50% target - and a 44% increase in the total market for licensed tick products (ie veterinarian prescription-only medicine, as verified by GFK research data, April 2016). The campaign led to an industry-wide meeting on the risks of tick-borne disease, to discuss the rising threat level, best course of action for the industry and potential recommendations to government.



Watch the Shout! Communications video at: <http://bit.ly/2dEWF6p>



What do journalists want?

Through its Media Briefing events, Gorkana is able to identify the key trends affecting journalists and their working relationships with PR professionals. In 2016, video has been top of the agenda – made apparent by the frequency with which it is brought-up by both the journalists being interviewed, and by the questions that are posed by the PR professionals who make up the Media Briefing audiences.

At the recent International Business Times UK event, editor in chief John Crowley and managing editor Julian Kossoff told the crowd that the news publication has a seven-strong team dedicated to video, and both recommended that pitched stories include a video element. Crowley and Kossoff also advised that the team preferred to receive unedited film, as opposed to an overproduced final edit. Crowley said: “We don’t mind if it’s unvarnished and in the form of rushes, we can build something out of that.”

Another perspective was offered at The Daily Telegraph event, when joint group business editors, James Quinn and Ben Wright, emphasised that video content is more than just, “middle-aged men in suits doing vox-pops.” Good content should allow viewers to learn something new. Quinn said: “Video is a storytelling tool. Good video content should teach viewers something they can’t learn from the text.”

Charlotte Gunn, digital editor at NME, said: “Video is a massive focus for NME. We’re doing in the region of three million video views a month across social, YouTube and onsite. Video is huge.” She adds that the music publication has moved away from the, more traditional, interview-style video, and is experimenting with more unexpected or unusual content, such as shadowing artists on sound checks. On social, Gunn says, NME has experimented with interactive sessions on Facebook Live. Engagement, says Gunn, has been “huge.”

Media outlets are adopting a more experimental approach to video, making the most of the, relative, affordability of the medium in recent years, and taking advantage of new technologies and tools that make the sharing of exciting and interactive video possible.

The format of video favoured by any individual journalist or publication clearly depends on the context, but there appear to be some identifiable common threads. Journalists prioritise editorial control, content that is useful to the viewer and that doesn’t feel too commercial and videos that are in-keeping with the house style.





Media owner case study: The Huffington Post



Dawn Kelly
The Huffington Post

Dawn Kelly, UK head of video and multimedia production at AOL-owned The Huffington Post, talks about how a modern, liberal and digital-first publication produces its video. HuffPost creates its own video, but it also accepts video content from PRs – as long as it is premium, original and relevant.

How important is video to HuffPost?

Video is hugely important to The Huffington Post, which is why we are doubling down in this area, focusing on creating video tailor-made for both on and off-platform. Having recently joined AOL in June as the UK head of video and multimedia production, I lead a newly-formed content team dedicated to creating and producing content that adds value to people's lives.

This summer, we're proud to premiere a brand new HuffPost Original series with Game of Thrones star, Sophie Turner, called #PowerShift, and we recently announced the acquisition of award-winning virtual reality company RYOT, enabling us to deliver award-winning films, linear video, 360°, and VR content across our 16 global editions.

How do you source the majority of your video content?

At HuffPost, we focus on both short-form editorial content and original premium content across multiple platforms. We work in partnership with talent to come up with ideas that resonate with our readers. We film a lot of our content ourselves, and work with trusted studios to provide quality content in line with our brand. We have a strong focus on creating live viewing experiences through dedicated streaming technology and platforms such as Facebook Live.

Does much of your video content come from PRs?

Currently, approximately 5% of our video content is sourced from PRs. HuffPost is dedicated to creating premium original content, exploring the themes that matter most to our readers.

What type of video do you like to receive?



Watch the huffingtonpost video at:
<http://huff.to/29BcsAX>

Focusing on both long and short form content, we understand that video can serve multiple purposes, but that engaging storytelling is at the heart of this. Core to our strategy is sharing informative, inspiring and empowering stories with an authentic and unique angle. In addition to this, we like to see videos that use video technology to its fullest. We prefer to work with partners from creation, rather than taking video that has already been filmed.

How do you like to be pitched video content?

Video pitches should come to us via email. They should clearly outline the story, and have a link to the B-roll.

Why is demand for video growing at such a fast rate?

As one of the largest digital media brands in Britain with 11.5 million unique visitors each month in the UK (comScore multiplatform, March 2016) alone, we know our readers are always on the go as they consume news 24/7. Video allows us to engage our audience in a short time frame and tell meaningful stories. The industry is seeing digital ad spend grow year over year to meet the demands of a tech savvy audience, rising to £8.606 billion in 2015, up 16.4% on a like for like basis, according to the IAB's digital advertising spend figures.



Conclusion



Planning, production and distribution are all crucial for the creation of effective video content. PR professionals should ensure that they remain focused on the specific goals of their brand throughout the entire process, and adapt their video strategy accordingly.



As video continues to grow in popularity, enjoyed by more people in a one-on-one and personalised way, brands have an opportunity to engage with their audience like never before.



PR professionals who are comfortable communicating through video have a powerful method of storytelling at their fingertips, and will find that they are better placed to meet the goals of their business or client.



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