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THE GAME CHANGER

ONLINE VIDEO FTW

IS YOUR SME MISSING THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY YET?

By Todd Cavanaugh

Streaming video is one of the fastest growing sectors of the web. According to a study by Cisco®, consumer Internet video traffic will account for 69% of all consumer Internet traffic by the year 2017. And this trend is most notable in the Middle East and Africa, where video traffic is growing faster than anywhere else in the world¹.

Jumping into online video is a bit intimidating for small and medium sized businesses, especially when you consider the mammoth advertising budgets spent by enterprises on commercials. But there hasn't been a better time for SMEs to

start using video as technology advancements and plummeting equipment costs have made professional quality films attainable by anyone.

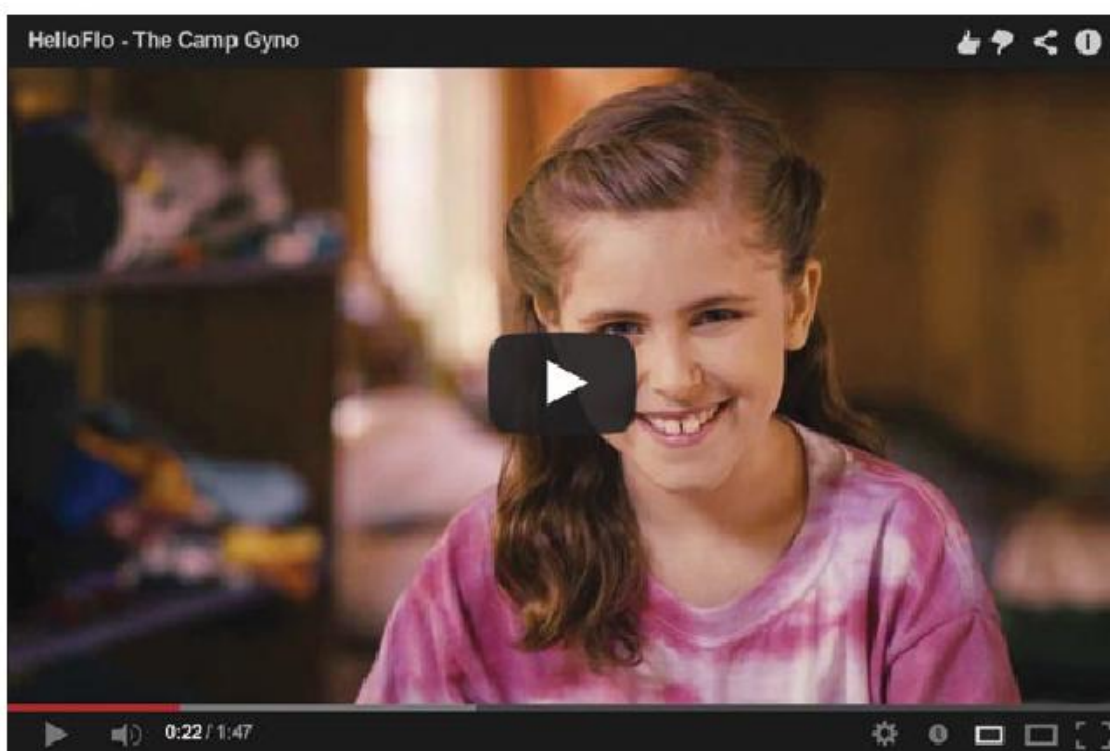
I realized online video was a game-changer in 2010 when I wrote and produced a viral video for less than \$400. That small investment drove millions of impressions and led to national radio and television appearances, including Fox News TV. I was managing a \$10,000/month Google Adwords campaign, but my \$400 video was getting more results!

Adding video to your marketing arsenal provides numerous benefits. Consider:

- **Email** Companies sending emails including video content had 21% higher conversion rate and a 24% higher average order value than emails that featured static images, according to one study².

- **E-commerce** Product videos overcome doubts and encourage consumers to buy. At Zappos.com, purchases increased by 10% when a product video was present³.

- **SEO** Video is considered a high-quality type of content, so Google and other search engines favor sites that offer it. It also tends to bring other fringe benefits that boost search engine rankings, like longer visits to your site and more engagement.



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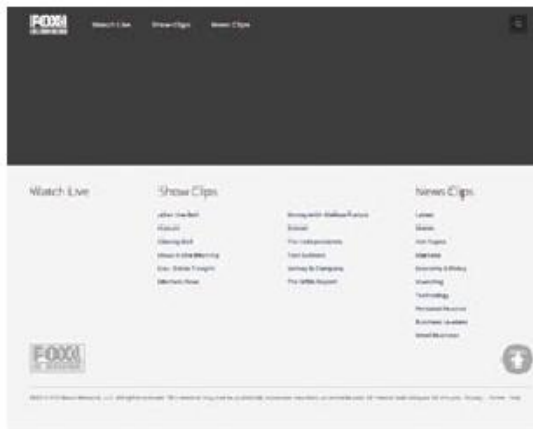
But perhaps the most amazing quality of video is its capacity to spread. A funny, whimsical, poignant, or emotional video can blast your company into the spotlight and grab the kind of media attention you can't buy.

Take product subscription service Hello Flo and its viral YouTube hit *The Camp Gyno*. In the ad, a pre-teen girl is the first at summer camp to get her period- or the "red badge of courage" as she humorously calls it. All the other girls look up to her as their source of information and tampons until they discover a better solution: Hello Flo's monthly packages containing tampons, liners, and candy.

¹ http://www.cisco.com/en/US/solutions/collateral/ns341/ns525/ns537/ns705/ns827/white_paper_c11-481360_ns827_Networking_Solutions_White_Paper.html

² <http://go.experian.com/forms/experian-digital-marketer-2012?expid=yb>

³ <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052748703899704576204413874760334>



Hello Flo's video obviously struck a chord. In one day, the video received over 80,000 views. It currently has nearly 7 million. The video's irreverent humor and youthful personality completely disrupted everything we thought about feminine product ads, which are typically sterile and tend to tiptoe around the subject matter.

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The ad—made without an agency—transformed Hello Flo's business overnight. "What took me a month, I now do in an hour," said Hello Flo founder Naama Bloom⁴. She said the overwhelming success of *The Camp Gyno* and the corresponding surge in sales has given her hope. And it all stemmed from a video conceived from a few people coming up with marketing ideas over a bunch of Thai food.



Todd Cavanaugh



Probably the best example of the power of video for SMEs is the launch video for Dollar Shave Club, a membership (subscription) service delivering razor blades monthly for as low as \$1 plus shipping. The company had been operating for almost a year, but it wasn't until the release of their debut video *Our Blades Are [...] Great* when Dollar Shave Club rose from obscurity to Internet stardom. The cheeky ad cost only \$4,500, but men were obviously drawn towards the simple message, over-the-top swagger, and ridiculous gags.

In less than 48 hours, 12,000 customers signed up and catapulted Dollar Shave Club into the upper echelons of subscription commerce startups.

Less than 9 months after their first video launched, they went on to raise \$9.8 million in Series A funding and have since grown to over 300,000 active members.⁵ Dollar Shave Club founder

and CEO Michael Dubin commented, "[The videos] help drive organic acquisition above average and they also help keep our paid efforts below [average costs]."⁶

Like Dollar Shave Club showed the world, you don't need a lot of money to make videos that get results. Last month, I decided to start looking for a new job. I wasn't happy with the results I was getting just emailing resumes, so I produced a creative video resume for \$150 and put it on my website at toddcavanaugh.com. In just a few days, it had over 4,500 views and I had several interviews.

What do these case studies teach us? Perhaps the most important lesson is that your great idea is now as good as anyone else's great idea. The Internet and affordable technology have leveled the playing field, so now you don't have to compete for paid advertising with companies boasting million dollar ad budgets. You can earn attention by tapping traits entrepreneurs are known for—creativity and risk-taking—in your marketing. So what are you waiting for?

After graduating with an MBA, Todd Cavanaugh excelled as the chief marketer for a rapidly growing nonprofit for five years. He and his work have been featured on *The Huffington Post*, Fox News TV, the front pages of AOL, YouTube, and Reddit; and other media hubs. Todd currently consults small and medium sized businesses to help them conceptualize and produce captivating content through films, presentations, online content, and live events in order to spread meaningful stories to millions of people. He currently resides in Rochester, NY.

⁴ <http://www.forbes.com/sites/clareoconnor/2013/08/02/like-santa-for-your-vagina-tampon-startup-hello-flo-takes-on-that-time-of-the-month/>

⁵ <http://www.adexchanger.com/e-commerce-2/dollarshaveclub-com-ceo-sees-a-fifty-fifty-future-in-paid-media-viral-video/>

⁶ <http://video.foxbusiness.com/v/2683546288001/the-secret-to-dollar-shave-clubs-success/#sp=show-clips>