



# THE MARKETER'S GUIDE TO ANIMATED VIDEO

*Special Report*

**Go**Animate

## Introduction: Online Video Is Here To Stay

Online video is a major asset for business marketing. Video delivers better engagement, sharing, and SEO momentum with its unique ability to cut through the digital noise of our preoccupied society. From a budgeting standpoint, video yields some of the best ROI of any content marketing initiative.<sup>1</sup>

But it's not enough to post random videos on YouTube or your website, sit back, and wait for the leads to roll in. Marketers should ask themselves—and this guide will attempt to answer—pragmatic questions like:

*How and where is best place to use video in the sales funnel?*

*Which types of video work best, and at what point in the sales funnel?*

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## BY THE NUMBERS

- ▶ More than **6 billion hours** of video are watched on YouTube every month—an amount that increases 50% each year.<sup>2</sup>
- ▶ A single minute of video is worth **1.8 million** written words.<sup>3</sup>
- ▶ **93%** of senior marketing professionals have used video for online marketing, up from 81% in 2012.<sup>4</sup>
- ▶ One study found that **60%** of marketers find video effective, behind only in-person events and webinars.<sup>5</sup>

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And the most important question:

*How can marketers produce high-quality, attention-grabbing, share-inducing videos without breaking the bank?*

## The DIY Craze Comes to Online Video

Companies no longer need to spend tens of thousands of dollars with an agency to create a few minutes of high-quality online video. They can hire skilled video freelancers—or, increasingly, bring video production in-house, just as they did with functions like PPC and social media.

But brands don't need to hire video specialists, either. Thanks to improvements in software, marketers can now create videos themselves without sacrificing quality.

## Enter Animated Video

An effective video entertains on many levels: there's a narrative, interesting camera angles, dramatic lighting, emotional audio, inviting text, and so on. But this also makes video difficult to produce. Good talent costs money. Professional-quality lighting requires special equipment. Outdoor sets require perfect weather.

That's why an increasingly popular subset within online video is animation. **Animated video lets marketers communicate a narrative emphatically and without constraints.** No need to hire actors or wait for Stormageddon to blow through.

With animated video, marketers can:

- ▶ **Create almost anything, and then some.** With its ability to bend the laws of nature, animation can bring product benefits to life in an allegorical form that really enforces the value proposition.
- ▶ **Give context to ideas.** Animated video can easily show products from different perspectives. Start on a close-up of a tree, and then zoom out to show the entire forest.
- ▶ **Transform thoughts and data into visuals.** Animation can demonstrate the steps in a process or present data in a way that's fluid and dynamic.
- ▶ **Explore different ways to communicate messages.** Animated video isn't constrained by existing video footage. You can switch backgrounds, move characters, or add props to get your point across.
- ▶ **Strike the right tone.** Animated video isn't limited to portrayals of real individuals, so you can strike a wider range of emotional tones and cover difficult subjects effectively.

Producing animation today isn't that complicated, either. There are great do-it-yourself platforms out there (like GoAnimate); even marketers unfamiliar with traditional video-making software can produce high-quality videos in a short amount of time.

## WHY IS ONLINE VIDEO SO EFFECTIVE?

By engaging multiple senses, video commands a viewer's full attention. A video effectively conveys—**in seconds**—a complex message that would require paragraphs in a blog post or text-based email.

## How, Where, and When to Use Animated Video

When should marketers use animated video? If all you need to do is aim a camera at your product—if you're selling a pair of shoes, for example—live action is the way to go. But if you're trying to describe anything very large (global logistics), very small (microprocessor architecture), or very abstract (Bitcoin), you should strongly consider choosing animated video.

Marketers who effectively incorporate animated video as part of their marketing strategy deploy it at every point in the sales funnel. Animated video can draw leads into an initial website visit; nurture them as they become serious prospects; and help convert them into paying customers. What's more, it can also help brands build ongoing relationships and retain those customers.

### The Top of the Funnel: Build Awareness

At this early stage of the selection process, buyers have identified their pain points and have begun researching options. The majority of IT buyers will review at least four pieces of content before they build a shortlist of products, according to TechTarget.<sup>6</sup>

Buyers get their initial content from two main sources: vendors, and third parties such as influencers or review sites. They go to vendors for technical details and pricing. They go to third parties to learn about the competitive landscape.

Retention rate for visual information can read **65%** vs. 10% for text-based information.<sup>7</sup>

—Social Media Today

## DON'T DAWDLE

Your video must engage viewers within **10 seconds** of watching it. And viewers will decide how much to watch based on how long they think it will take to get the gist of it.<sup>8</sup>

### Why use animated video at this stage?

Buyers at this point in the funnel want to gather as much information as possible, so transmitting information quickly will almost always be a win-win. That's the beauty of video: It's an inherently more attractive and unique type of media. Animated video is the most eye-catching, engaging way to capture a potential buyer's interest.

## How do you use video to build awareness?

Online video improves organic traffic via search because, though Google is displaying them 27% less than they did in 2014, video thumbnails remain very attractive for clickers querying information. This added visibility attracts a new segment of potential customers. **Search listings with videos are 41% more likely to be clicked on than those without videos.**<sup>10</sup>

## What types of video do early-stage buyers want to see?

Let's look at the types of videos that work best at the top of the sales funnel.

### Explainer videos

An explainer video is just what it sounds like: a one- to two-minute video explaining the problem the product solves, and why the viewer should want to use it. It's like a visual elevator pitch.

Explainer videos have several advantages over traditional text explanations and descriptions. **For one thing, 60% of site visitors will watch a video before reading text.**<sup>12</sup> They also tend to recall videos better.

A well-made explainer video can increase your conversion rates by 15% to 50%.<sup>13</sup> That's why it's so important—if it's not a home run, you may be losing potential business. Use an explainer video to pique the viewer's interest. Be informative and clear without taking up too much time.

Website visitors are **64%** more likely to buy a product on an online retail site after watching a video.<sup>9</sup>

—Digital Sherpa

In an eye-mapping study of Search Engine Results Pages (SERPs), video results commanded **more attention** than other listings.<sup>11</sup>

—Invodo

### Video infographics

Infographics present data in a format that's interesting and helps people understand complex ideas. In addition, people share infographics much more frequently than they share text-based articles. Unfortunately, as infographics have proliferated, their quality has dropped. Infographic fatigue is here, and it's real.

But *animated video infographics* let marketers stand out from the crowd and get back to the essence of data visualization. By animated video infographics, we don't mean putting graphical data on a series of PowerPoint slides with a bit of movement. We're talking about *fully animated videos featuring several infographic components*.

Plus, they're easier to measure. It's hard to know how much a viewer reads or retains of a static infographic. With videos, you can track the number of views, the number of completions, and even where falloff occurs.

## Mid-Funnel: Nurture And Convert Leads Into Prospects

At this stage, potential customers know the basics about your company and its competitors. They also know a good amount about your product. But even if they prefer it to the competition, at this stage in the funnel, you still need to help them justify the purchase to team members and executives.

### Why use animated video at this stage?

An animated video will give you much more flexibility when explaining complex products or services. A whiteboard animation, for example, applies a light look for heavy concepts, while the constant drawing motion keeps audiences engaged.

### How do you use video to nurture and convert?

Post videos for this stage of the funnel on a product-specific page or a landing page. Create more targeted content that effectively conveys your product's features to the decision-maker, or that lays out the talking points clearly for a subordinate to take to his or her boss.

There are two other ways you can use videos mid-funnel.

#### Email

People love seeing videos in their inboxes, if only as a break from the onslaught of text-based email. **Merely using the word "video" in a subject line increases open rates 19% and click-through rates by 65%.**<sup>14</sup> Wistia found that the click/open ratio of an email newsletter with a video at the top was 38%; the ratio for the identical email with a graphic instead of a video was 12%! No surprise—video is much more likely to grab the email recipient's attention.

## TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE TOP-OF-FUNNEL VIDEOS

- ▶ Explain that your product will remove the viewer's pain points.
- ▶ Lay out the high-level value proposition.
- ▶ Don't just make your video a laundry list of product features.
- ▶ Mention the price of the product or service.
- ▶ Keep it short—which means fewer than 120 seconds.
- ▶ Describe the competitive landscape and where your company stands within it.

Using the word "video" in email subject lines **reduces unsubscribes** by 26%.

—Brainshark

But in many ways, email is the Wild West of video marketing. Today, only some email clients support video playback within emails. Outlook does, Gmail doesn't; Hotmail does, Yahoo doesn't; and so on.

In the meantime, there's software to help you optimize your emails for all audiences. Solutions like MailChimp can automatically convert video embed codes into a screenshot that links to a landing page. You can also do this manually with video merge tags.

### Landing pages

Adding video to landing pages translates into performance boosts in email opt-ins, lead form submissions, and product sales. Videos increase the length of page visits by conveying information in an interesting and seamless way. Videos also have a unique opportunity to humanize brands. Lastly, it gives people who don't like to read another way to consume content.

Here are some best practices for landing page videos:

1. **Keep it short.** Aim for length that's as brief as possible while still getting across your main message. There's rarely a need to create a landing page video longer than two minutes; most should be even shorter.
2. **Put your most important message at the beginning.** If you anticipate a drop off in viewership, but can't shorten the video, make sure your most important value propositions, benefits, and results appear as early as possible.
3. **Make sure your call to action is either visible throughout the video or immediately after it ends.** While videos that take over the screen can be impressive, you can lose customers if visitors can't find their way out of your video and to your CTA. Put some thought behind where the CTA should live to optimize conversion.

### What types of video work best with mid-funnel buyers?

At this stage, present leads with video content stressing the ROI of your product. Be specific, and show actual dollar amounts, i.e. "your \$20 subscription can translate into \$500 in sales."

### Demos

The title of a middle-funnel video is key. **One study showed that merely replacing the word "play" with "demo" on a video increased clicks by 83%.**<sup>17</sup> Zappos found that products with a demo video saw sales jump 30% relative to those without one.

## TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE MID-FUNNEL VIDEOS

- ▶ Post them deeper on your site, away from the homepage—perhaps on a product-specific portal or landing page.
- ▶ Stress the justification for purchasing your product and the ROI
- ▶ Explain how your product will remove the viewer's pain points.

Videos on landing pages can boost conversion more than **80%**, and deliver ROI within a week.<sup>15</sup>

Marketing Tech Blog found that adding video to a landing page resulted in a **130.5%** increase in leads.<sup>16</sup>

### Gated videos

The mid-funnel is also great for gated videos. But you must create a high-quality video that makes users willing to share their email addresses in order to watch it.

The goal isn't to go viral: You don't want to post something like "The 7 Craziest Things Madonna Ever Said," because this probably isn't targeted to your audience. Instead, offer something much more detailed.

## The End of the Funnel: Sealing the Deal

Hooray! Your prospect is ready to buy. But many companies hesitate to offer videos this far along in the sales funnel. Why divert the prospect's attention with a video when she's so close to opening her wallet?

But your buyer may still have specific questions about the product and customer service. Video can help answer those questions. Product videos can explain the pragmatic benefit of your product or service, its ROI or its value versus competing products.

### Why use animated video at this stage?

Animated video lets you re-emphasize the main value proposition of your product or service in a way that's easier to retain than paragraphs of text. You can clearly demonstrate the steps in a process or provide animated infographics demonstrating ROI. It's also a strong signal of your company's culture; through animated video, potential customers will get a good idea of the type of company they'll be working with.

### How do you use video to get prospects to buy?

Videos of the product in action can help re-assure hot leads that they're making the right choice. Use video to reinforce the product's strongest features, and highlight the customer service team's accessibility.

### What types of video do end-funnel buyers want to see?

To reflect users' needs at this point, create FAQ videos about the product's best features as well as videos promoting the customer support team. The latter helps put a human face on customer service and assures customers that they'll be supported post-purchase.

*Web-based distributor Shoeline.com increased Web sales conversions 44% when it started using videos for showcasing its products.<sup>18</sup>*

—MarketingProfs

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## TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE END-OF-THE-FUNNEL VIDEOS

- ▶ Post FAQ videos on the pricing page, deeply targeted landing pages, or even the checkout pages.
  - ▶ List your business hours, phone numbers and any other ways customers can get support.
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## Ready to Try Animated Video in Your Marketing Campaigns?

GoAnimate is the quickest and most cost-effective solution for making professional animated video. GoAnimate helps marketers produce a wide range of custom videos with intuitive drag-and-drop tools.

GoAnimate provides libraries with thousands of assets, including characters, actions, backgrounds, props, music tracks, and sound effects. More of these assets are added all the time. If you want to import your own audio, images, video, fonts, or Flash files -- GoAnimate provides a simple import tool.

Finished videos can be downloaded as mp4 files, in HD or Full HD resolution, or exported directly to a number of partners, including YouTube. Business subscriptions also include unlimited hosting and playback, whether from the GoAnimate site or via easily copied embed codes.

Make your first video in less than five minutes. Visit [goanimate.com](http://goanimate.com) for a free trial.

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