

column

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Paul Allen started Infobases, MyFamily.com, and 10x Marketing. He currently runs business incubator Provo Labs. He has taught at UVSC and BYU and he blogs at www.infobaseventures.com/blog.



rush into online video

I love quoting hockey great Wayne Gretzky who reportedly said, "I skate to where the puck is going to be, not where it is."

I think this is great advice for business. Figure out where things are going, and try to get there before others do.

Late last year, Michael Wolf, a partner at McKinsey & Company said, "The basis for content on the Internet is now shifting from text to video. This allows advertisers to take advantage of the kind of branding advertising they are used to on television."

At CES this January, major announcements from Intel, Yahoo, Google and AOL confirmed that the era of online video has arrived. This shift from text to video is happening at an accelerated rate.

Now may be the time for you to make online video a part of your Internet marketing strategy.

Consider this: According to Alexa, the text-based Wikipedia (the amazing online encyclopedia created by thousands of volunteer editors) is now the 17th most popular Web site. Wikipedia is only five years old, so its growth has been spectacular.

But another site with content created by its users launched last year that recently passed Wikipedia in page views and will soon pass Wikipedia in unique visitors.

It's called YouTube.com.

This online video sharing site attracts millions of visitors each day. Almost all of its traffic growth has come in the last seven months. YouTube visitors now watch more than 100 million video clips per day.

I've never seen another Web site with such explosive growth as YouTube, and

I've been watching the industry carefully for more than 10 years.

And now, online video sharing sites are popping up everywhere.

So what does this mean for your business?

It means that you should find ways to produce and distribute video online. That is where the puck is going.

Here are a few examples of how online video can put you on the map...

>> A Utah mother develops a music and charting system that helps kids do their chores every day without any nagging from mom or dad. Her simple Web site, www.childrensmiraclemusic.com, features a compelling 3-minute video that plays automatically when someone visits. She sells more than 1,000 copies of her product with very little advertising.

>> The More Good Foundation, a non-profit organization that promotes good, uplifting content on the Web, uploads the Mormon Ad public service advertisement videos on YouTube and Google Video, garnering tens of thousands of views in the first few months.

>> 10Speed Media shoots a six-minute video promoting Westminster College's Winter Skiing Program and uploads it to YouTube.com. Thousands of people watch the video and many inquire about the program.

>> Stride Gum launches a \$50 million advertising campaign for its new brand of long-lasting gum. As part of its online strategy, Stride Gum

sponsors Matt Harding as he travels the world and videotapes himself dancing in dozens of countries. His super viral Web site at www.wherethehellismatt.com gets millions of visitors. Everyone who watches Matt dance learns about Stride Gum. Brilliant!

Almost half of Internet users watched online video last month and the number is increasing rapidly.

My advice: Jump into online video. Produce it. Cut it up. Distribute it. Use humor. Make it viral. Put your URL or phone number on your video clips. It costs less than ever before. Potentially millions of consumers can watch your video, share it and even download it to their video iPod.

If you need help with online video, one local option is 10Speed Media, a company that recently spun out of Provo Labs.

10Speed Media helps customers create and distribute short-format videos to take advantage of free online distribution from a score of video sharing sites (including YouTube) and a growing network of affiliates and high-traffic Web sites.

PRWeb, a major online press release distribution company, has partnered with 10Speed Media to launch PRWeb.TV, a new service that enables any business to distribute an online video news release.

Your online videos can generate brand awareness, leads and new customers. It isn't that difficult, and it isn't that expensive.

Remember Wayne Gretzky. He showed how many goals you can score by getting to the puck before everyone else does. tm

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