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Bring your site to life with video

by *David Kain*

Have you ever noticed how when you are walking through a store, a restaurant, your house or your co-workers office and you see a television on or a video playing it almost always catches your eye and you do a double take to check out what's on?



You are certainly not alone in how video draws your attention. I do not know the psychology of it, nor do I need to know it to recommend it on a website.

A quick check of the daily Internet traffic rankings on Alexa.com will convince you of the viability of online video and their ability to cause people to watch. The video website YouTube was ranked number 3 in global site traffic when I checked before writing this article - just behind Yahoo and Google. What's really incredible is that one of the automotive dealership "Badger commercials" on YouTube poking fun at the stereotypical car salesperson has 250,365 views as of this writing.

A lot of dealerships are hesitant to put video on their website because they are concerned that they cannot afford the production costs and the finished product if done on the cheap will not be well received by the consumer. Both of these are very relevant concerns but I hope I can convince you to at least give it a try.

First, before you spend time, effort and money to produce a masterpiece try a simple approach. Simply use a digital camera that someone at the dealership already owns, and shoot a video of one of your salespeople doing a 60 second walk-around on a trade-in. The reason I suggest 60 seconds is that the television and radio community have established that as an attention holding baseline for viewers/listeners. This is especially true if they are not specifically interested in the product or service being presented. However, once a consumer has focused in on a particular product or service then you can take more time.

I personally enjoy the dealership website based videos used by a Toyota dealership Lynchburg, VA. Most anytime when you visit their site you will see a young man named Josh presenting their "Internet Deal of the Day". The dealership has created a YouTube channel where they can host the video for free and then they embed the link to the video on their website so it plays automatically when someone clicks in to the site. What I like most of all is that it is obviously homemade, comes across as sincere and allows the dealership and the salesperson to differentiate themselves from others in the market.

Another good example where I have seen good use of personalized video elements is on a site for a Mercedes Benz dealership in Phoenix, AZ. On this site the dealer principal walks out of the showroom as the site opens and welcomes site visitors to their website. This demonstrates an easy convergence of the traditional dealership visit and the virtual visit.

A Chevrolet dealership in the metro Knoxville, TN market has found that the effort they put into developing their online 60 Second Test Drives has been well worth it. Once produced, they are portable and can be sent as links for customers to click in emails. Once again, in the case with this Chevy dealer, the videos are not high priced production pieces but they work and compel the customer to stay on the site and watch.

With our clients who use online video on their site we have seen an incredible spike in time spent online as well as the most important ingredient - conversion to a lead. Did video cause the customer to submit? Likely, video in and of itself did not cause the customer to submit a request, but it does allow them to learn more about the product, services and people which increases their comfort level and in turn assists greatly to improve site conversions.

I would recommend you consider video on a small scale, measure the impact, and then move forward if the results show what I think they will. All you have to do is contact your website builder and see how you can use video on your site. Give it a try, I think you'll enjoy it and you'll sell more cars.

If we can help you with this or any other Internet marketing ideas feel free to call, email or text.