Grow Your Business with Video

Tell your story at scale

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Video is driving the future of communication. Improvements in technology have made it easier for individuals and businesses to create and share videos. With the public spending an average of 84 minutes a day watching videos online, consumers and employees alike expect video from your business.

Video *has* to be part of your growth plan. But more than that, video can help you grow. This is a period of necessary change and a period of opportunity for those who act fast. You need to understand what makes video so compelling, how video can be deployed to help your business grow, and what scaling your video production capabilities will require. Understanding the needs of both IT teams and creative teams is essential to the effective deployment of a successful video strategy.

What you'll learn from this eBook

What we will deliver here is a guide to video. We'll look at how video can help you get new customers, retain customers you already have, and bring consistency and community to your internal teams. We will explain how to build a workflow and IT system able to handle the rigours of video, and dive into some of the advances in Video Asset Management (VAM) software that can accelerate and simplify video production. This eBook will transform your approach to video production — let's get started.

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How video delivers growth

Video is simply easier to consume than text. But the power of video goes far beyond that. Video commands multiple primary senses at once, and when witnessing actual people move and speak, the empathy and emotions of viewers are engaged far more than by static images or text. The benefits brought by video are not one dimensional. But if there were a stand out point regarding the value of video, it has to be 'engagement'.

The power of video to engage is clearly laid out in the stats. Social media posts with video get far more reach than those without video. Consumers themselves report a preference for video over every other type of content. Even blog posts are incorporating more videos, and those that do get over three times the traffic from web searches than posts without videos. Companies that host video content on their websites experience a 41% increase in traffic.

And the popularity of video isn't limited to consumers. 59% of senior executives prefer to watch video than to read text. If you are a B2B (business–to–business) brand, this is something you need to consider when looking to connect with those key decision–makers. It's clear that people cannot get enough video — you need to be able to deliver.

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Movement, Image, Sound: Power

Video is so engaging because it's a multifaceted communication tool. No matter what context in which video is deployed, it pulls together all of the resources of modern communication: attention-grabbing movement, affecting music, pictures, text, graphics, sounds, colors, and above all, the realistic portrayal of *actual people*.

Of all the resources available, video is the closest you have to mimic the power and persuasion of a personal, face-to-face meeting. But unlike a meeting, that video can be delivered through an email, blog post, advertisement or landing page. Moreover, that same video can be seen again and again, by different people, at little resource cost to you. Video delivers the engagement of in-person communication, at scale. The value of this is effectively limitless, but has four main areas of significant importance:

1. Marketing and outreach

If you want to grow, you need new customers. 51% of marketers name video as the type of content with the best ROI. When looked at in the context of the stats mentioned above, this shouldn't surprise anyone. According to a 2015 Nielsen study, even less than 10 seconds of viewing a video increases lasting brand awareness and purchasing intent.

By displaying actual humans with movement and sound, videos offer the chance to impart a much more personal sensibility than other media. When it comes to finding new customers and making a memorable impact, video is a key tool to growth.

2. Customer loyalty

New customers are great, but you won't grow if you can't hold onto the customers you already have. A lot of elements obviously need to go into creating an effective customer loyalty program. But what almost every customer loyalty program has in common are persistent efforts to stay in contact.

For the same reasons that video is so great for outreach, it's an invaluable tool for keeping in touch with your existing customers too. What's more, 70% of Twitter users say they have shared a brands' video with friends. That 'shareability' is not only helpful for outreach, it can foster a sense of community among customers that will build loyalty when effectively executed.

3. Delivering a smooth customer experience

Critical to both customer loyalty and customer acquisition is a positive (and frictionless) customer experience. Video can help you do this simply because it's popular and easy to consume. A near-universal 98% of users say they have watched an explainer video to learn more about a product — and 74% of those people say they went on to buy that product.

Maybe even more relevant to CX, 68% of users say that they would prefer to watch a video that explains how to solve a problem over speaking with a support team. Increasingly, if you want to deliver the kind of customer experience that is expected, video needs to play a role.

4. Training at scale

Growing your brand isn't all about customer acquisition and retention. As you serve more customers, you will need to grow your internal teams. Video can help you do that.

When it comes to training, 75% of employees prefer watching video over reading. Video combines the personality and enjoyability of in-person training session with the on-demand reference ability provided by text. Video allows your employees to get the very best training every single time, while eliminating travel expenses for experts and trainers. In the same way, meetings and seminars can be conducted with participants and audiences located anywhere. This means that video allows your company to massively scale their onboarding at highly reduced costs.

Internal comms videos can improve a sense of community in even the largest companies. If you want to maximize retention and simplify onboarding, video needs to be part of your internal communication strategy.

Are you ready for video at scale?

Video lets you multiply the impact of one good sales pitch, product demo, brand positioning statement or training session a thousand-fold — if not more. Video can take your most effective investments in communication and scale them to match the demands of your growing business. But if you want to do that, you are going to need to scale your video production capabilities.

64% of marketers see video as the most difficult content to create, which is no surprise: the same elements that make video so compelling (combining audio, visual and narrative design) make the process of creating video that much more challenging.

Video production is slow, cumbersome and intensive. It requires the coordination of specialists, dedicated IT resources and creative flare. Getting ready for video at scale requires addressing IT and workflow optimizations that account for the particularities of video. It means updating your processes to dynamically match your production with the outcomes that you need at any given time.

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Step 1: Get your IT team ready for the demands of video

High-quality video takes up a lot of digital space. For example, a standard ProRes 422 HQ file at 1080 and 30fps is around 1.7GB per minute of footage. With 4K files being roughly four times the size of 1080p, and with 8k on the way, it's easy to see that the amount of storage space required to stay relevant will continue to skyrocket.

To make matters worse, video files are dense. Compared to other media assets, they have a high 'bitrate' (the number of bits per second required to transmit a file in real-time). The size and bitrate create issues for file sharing and cloud-based collaboration. It can even create bandwidth issues accessing large volumes of video on internal systems. This is a major problem for production workflows. However, on a much more basic level, large file sizes simply create issues for storage.
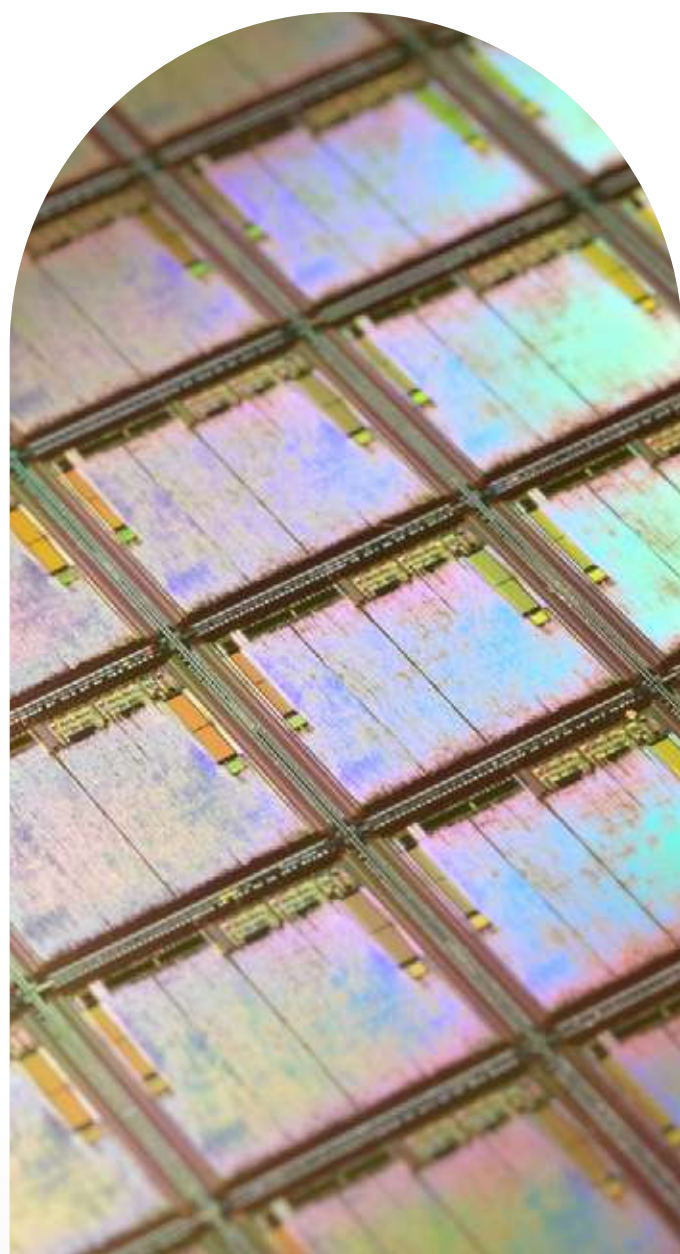
Compression basics

The obvious first step to minimizing the demands of video is to optimize your use of compression. All compression effectively works the same way. An algorithm assesses the video and deletes (or minimizes) data that is deemed unnecessary/ redundant. Different types of compression are defined by what is assessed and how it is assessed. The degree of compression is defined by how much information is removed.

Lossy vs lossless compression

The big distinction in compression is lossy vs lossless. These terms describe two types of compression, one in which the original data can be recovered (lossless), and one where compression permanently degrades quality (lossy). Lossy compression can obviously reduce files sizes further than lossless compression while retaining equivalent playback quality. However, it comes at the cost of permanence.

Common lossy formats are:
- MPEG-4 part 2
- H.263
- H.264
- HEVC (H.265)
- WMV

Common lossless formats are:
- H.264 lossless
- H.265 lossless
- Apple ProRes

What types of compression is best for which job?

Different types of compression are better for different outcomes. For archive, you need to consider what you want to use your footage for in the future. Generally speaking, you want to choose lossless compression for archived footage — giving you the option to restore that file to its original quality and re-use it for different projects. When it comes 'off-line' editing, and the creation of proxies (something we will come back to in detail) lossy formats are much more useful, simply because of the need to minimize bitrate.

Hardware options for video: storage and compute

The IT center of your video production operation is your hardware. You need resources for archive storage. You also need central systems on which editing can take place. For some operations, the actual editing might get outsourced to freelancers using their own computers. However, you still need to make some internal IT investments to manage your system.

Many editors will be using powerful PCs/Macs and perform editing directly on those machines. Others will use local servers instead. Where remote access is concerned, this requires the creation of proxies and conforming those compressed files back to high-resolution. Conforming is one more step that requires compute power.

When it comes to both storage and compute, your options break down between standard on-premises solutions and cloud-based models — or some combination of the two. You need to think about your ability to access both forms of compute and storage power within your system for tasks such as editing, conforming, proxy creation and archive storage.

1. On-premises hardware

The traditional method to store and access all digital files is to use physical arrays that are on-premises or in a data center. Solid on-premises hardware is great, and always look to put to use hardware you already have. However, this is increasingly an insufficient answer on its own. On-premises hardware is expensive, takes up physical space and, perhaps most importantly, is challenging to scale.

Every time you want to expand your existing on-premises hardware, you need to consider vendor choice and how that hardware will integrate into your overall system. You may also need to think about storage vs compute — making sure that you have the server capabilities to manage all of your storage resources. This latter point is one reason for the increasing popularity of 'hyper-converged' storage systems (solutions that merge compute and storage resources within a single box) among companies with large storage requirements.

However, no matter how you scale on-premises hardware, you can never escape the demands of growth. Moreover, any investments you make are permanent. You cannot dynamically scale on-premises IT resources to meet the demands of a specific project without committing to maintain that hardware indefinitely.

On-premises hardware also presents access limitations. Although a NAS (network-attached storage) system can be configured to allow for remote access, this effectively creates a private cloud that relies on the upload speed of the Internet connection where the on-premises hardware is located. On-premises hardware is fast, reliable and secure, but it's not a solution able to meet the demands of modern businesses on its own — much less the requirements of video at scale.
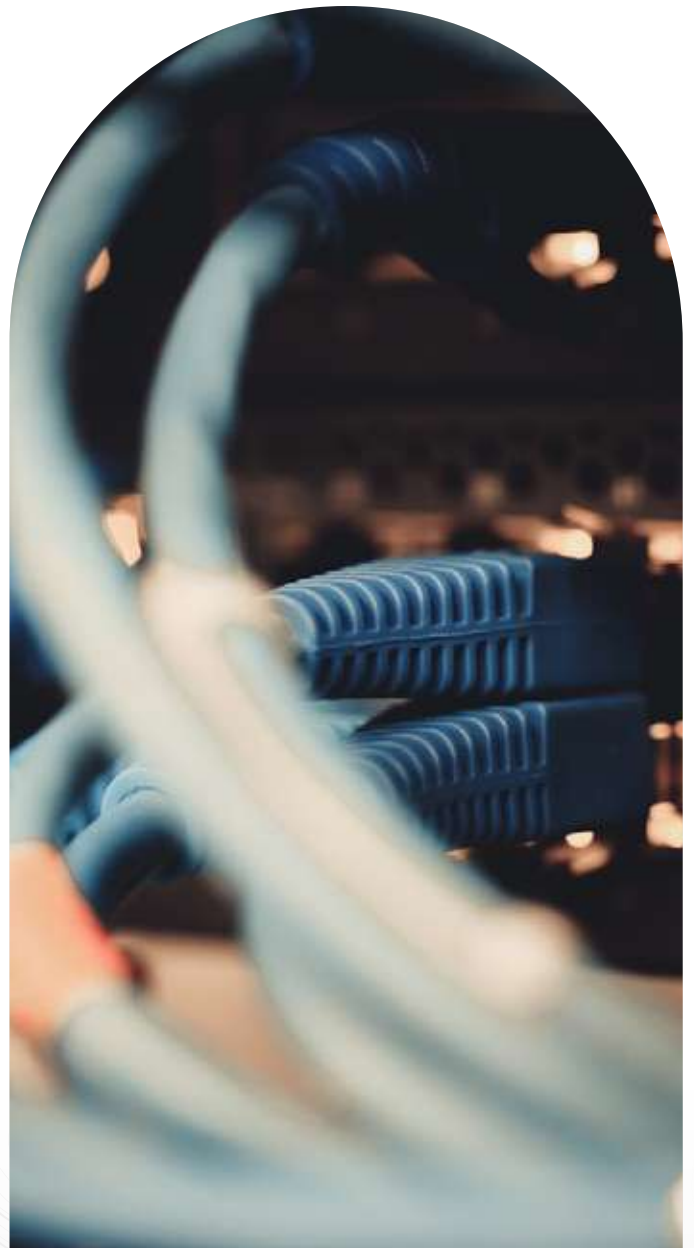
2. Cloud-based power

The cloud has come to play an important role in almost all businesses. Although video production has lagged behind when it comes to cloud adoption, this is changing, and for good reason. Cloud technology is rapidly maturing, and advanced compression tools have reduced some of the bitrate issues limiting access.

Cloud systems offers remote access, easy and dynamic scalability, and straightforward pricing models. But it's important to note that not all 'clouds' are the same.

Public vs private clouds: Cloud technology broadly cuts along two distinct lines — public and private clouds. The public cloud is basically the internet. You rent space off of public servers from one of the major providers like Azure or AWS. Critically, this delivers 'dynamic scalability'. With the public cloud, you pay for what you use, providing the ability to seamlessly scale your access to resources when up or down needed.

A private cloud is basically standard hardware configured to allow remote access. Owning the hardware delivers some perceived security and access speed benefits, but brings with it all of the scaling problems of on-premises hardware. What's more, most of the benefits of the private cloud actually stem from misconceptions.

A data center is always going to be more physically secure than an office building, and high-level encryption ensures digital security. A private cloud will deliver faster and more consistent access speeds than the public cloud to workers in the office where the hardware is located. But the opposite is true for remote access. Public cloud providers will have faster and more reliable routes to the internet than your office — even if you invest in the best possible bandwidth package, which you should do if you're taking cloud adoption seriously.

Disaster recovery (DR) and business continuity in the cloud: In addition to scalability, the cloud also brings great DR and business continuity capabilities to any business. Having a remotely accessible and easily scalable secondary computing resource is a primary feature of a DR plan. By distributing your video assets across cloud and on-premises infrastructure, you are naturally more prepared for any technical or physical failure that may befall your organization.

There is value to both the public cloud and private cloud, just like there are benefits to both on-premises hardware and the cloud more generally. But if you want simple scalability, you need to look at the public cloud for answers.

3. Hybrid architecture

Cloud technology should play a role in any IT solution built to work at scale. For some agencies wholly dependent on remote workers, the cloud might deliver everything that's needed. But the pure power and speed of on-premises hardware mean that it will likely retain a relevant role for many workflows, particularly when you factor in the bitrate demands of video editing, conforming and processing.

With that said, the right software control tools will not only allow you to create and stream proxies compressed down to 2% of their original size (something we will return to in the next step), but also conform and process those files in the cloud. In some cases, this can be better than using local hardware as even local networks can get clogged up with traffic if users are accessing locally stored high-res files.

Regardless, the point of hybrid architecture is to unite on-premises hardware, private clouds and public clouds within a single solution — allowing you to tier your storage and access, utilising the best tool for each job.

If you are serious about video, a hybrid solution is the best option. It will allow you to scale on-demand, access high-performance hardware when required, and flexibly deliver remote access when needed. It also delivers integrated disaster recovery/business continuity options.

The problem with a hybrid approach is controlling how your assets are tiered. Without software that can simply control your system, you're likely to create significant administrative burdens transferring assets between different resources. This is why, in addition to the hardware, you need to take your software investments seriously.

LONDON

NEW YORK

SYDNEY
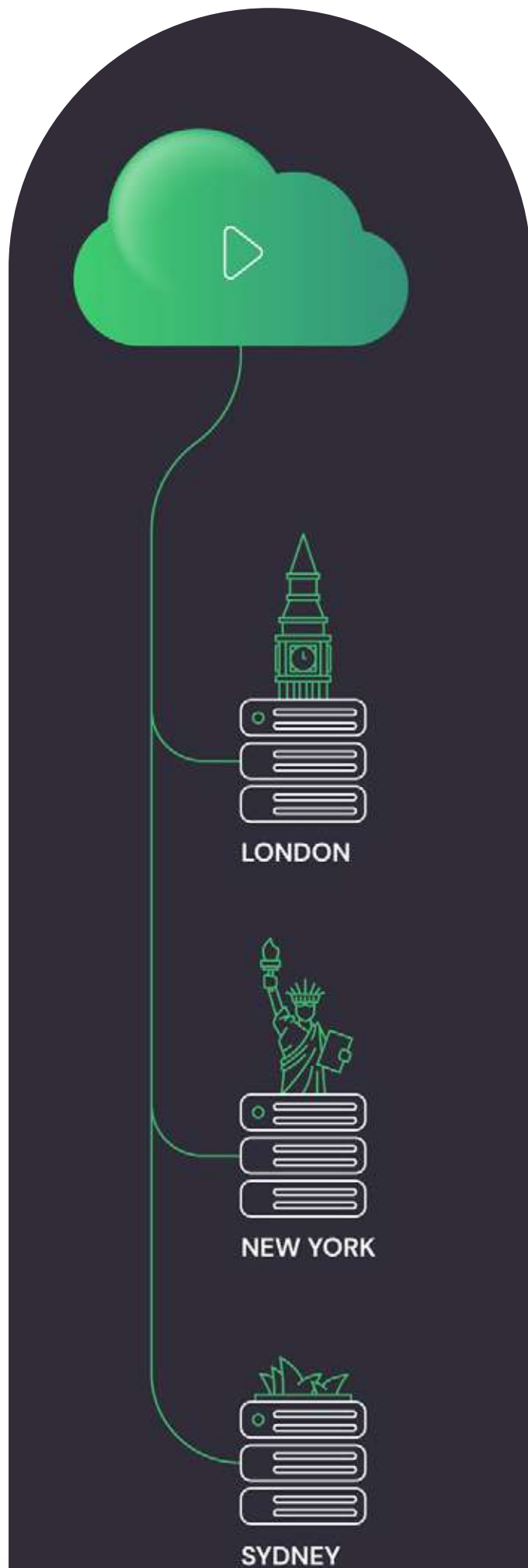
Step 2: Understand video asset management (VAM)

If you want to master video, you need VAM. So, what is VAM?

VAM covers a number of software systems built to manage video. Evolving out of older DAM (digital asset management) and MAM (media asset management) tools, VAM focuses on delivering functionality purpose-built for video. A good VAM tool will not only make it simpler for you to manage and centralize a distributed and hybrid storage system, it delivers new workflow and production capabilities.

In reality, there are a wide range of software solutions on the market called VAM, DAM, MAM, PAM, CAM and a whole host of additional acronyms. There are significant differences when it comes to functionality. However, these differences are not uniformly captured by what the software is called.

When it comes to picking software tools that can help you manage video production at scale, what's important is looking at what those tools can deliver. That covers three broad areas:

1. Centralized access to video assets

A good VAM tool will help you centralize access to your video assets. That doesn't necessarily mean centralizing where those assets are stored (that could be a disaster recovery nightmare), it means centralizing how you access a distributed network of video assets. Generally, this is delivered through a web browser or integrated features within editing tools, such as a Panel within Adobe Premiere Pro or After Effects.

For more basic VAM tools, centralized access will be limited in focus to either archive or production environments. This is helpful (it's why these older tools were developed in the first place), but using separate systems for active management of assets and archive isn't optimal. It forces you to make hard choices about what to archive, drives up storage requirements and costs, and diminishes your ability to access and put to good use archive material.

The leading-edge of VAM creates dynamic archives — an interface that merges both production and archive environments — allowing you easy access to whatever material you need. Centralizing all of your video assets not only makes it easier to control and access files stored across a hybrid storage environment, it changes the kinds of strategies you can deploy in production. For example, it becomes far easier to repurpose archived footage in new productions.

As you invest more in video assets, you'll want easy access to that back catalog. The centralization of that information is essential for a smoothly running system. It's hard to overstate the importance of easily searchable archives that mesh directly with production-orientated tools. That single solution will increase your efficiency as a team, whether or not you adopt any other cutting edge tools — and without it, the value of those tools will be lost.

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2. Managing Metadata

One out of every ten hours spent at work by editors and other creatives is wasted looking for assets. Even if you have the perfect material for your project, using it is not an option if it can't be found. Metadata is the key to video asset organization.

Metadata is simply *data about data;* that is to say, information (data) about files (data). Video file metadata can include tags regarding content as well as length, date created, etc. VAM helps with metadata in a couple of independent ways.

- **Ingest automation:** The process of capturing and storing video files so that they can be easily identified and located is called 'ingestion'. Without the right software, metadata must be created manually. This takes up an employee's time and allows a lot of opportunity for error. VAM completely automates the creation of basic metadata tags (time, length, source, etc.). This removes any chance for error while drastically accelerating the ingest process.

- **Advanced metadata standardization:** The most useful metadata goes beyond date and time. By creating descriptive tags regarding files ("man smiling" or "child running", for example), you gain far more searchable information that can help you find the file you need, exactly when you need it. This information can be applied to every clip, subclip, frame or groups of frames, providing maximum searchability between clips and within single clips. The problem here is uniformity and time.

  Descriptive metadata tags are only really useful if they are consistent. But this is very hard to achieve with manual processes. For example, different media managers might tag that shot of a "man smiling" in a number of different ways — "smiling man" or "man grinning", or something entirely different like "happy office worker". This will make it far harder to find these shots, and compare them with all other like–for–like shots in your archive, or even achieve production material.

  VAM helps mitigate these errors in two different ways. The more basic solution is to prompt media managers with a number of standardized descriptive tags based on their original manual input. This makes sure that all comparable shots can be found using the same language. However, this does very little to minimize the time required to create this descriptive metadata.
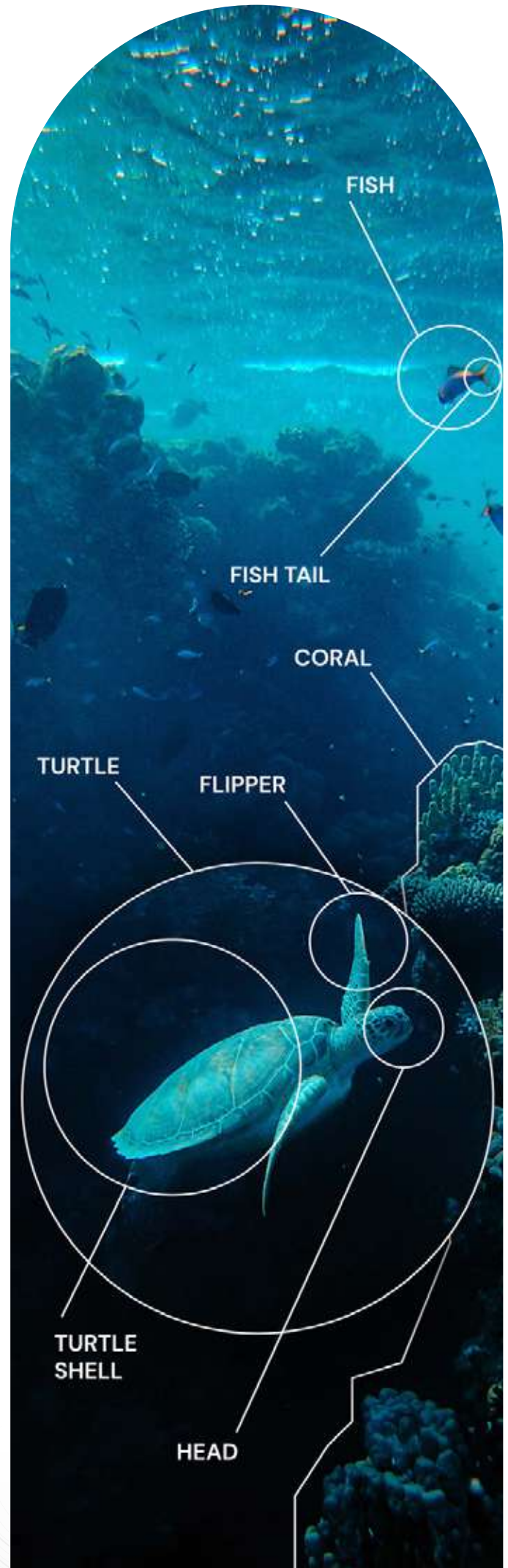
- **Advanced detection technology:** The most advanced VAM tools use object detection and natural voice recognition to take metadata creation and searchability to a new level. Rather than relying on manual inputs, this kind of detection technology can scan video files and create dozens of highly descriptive metadata tags. The speed at which this can be done is even able to accommodate live recordings, simplifying the processes so much that accurate metadata tags can be created in near real-time.
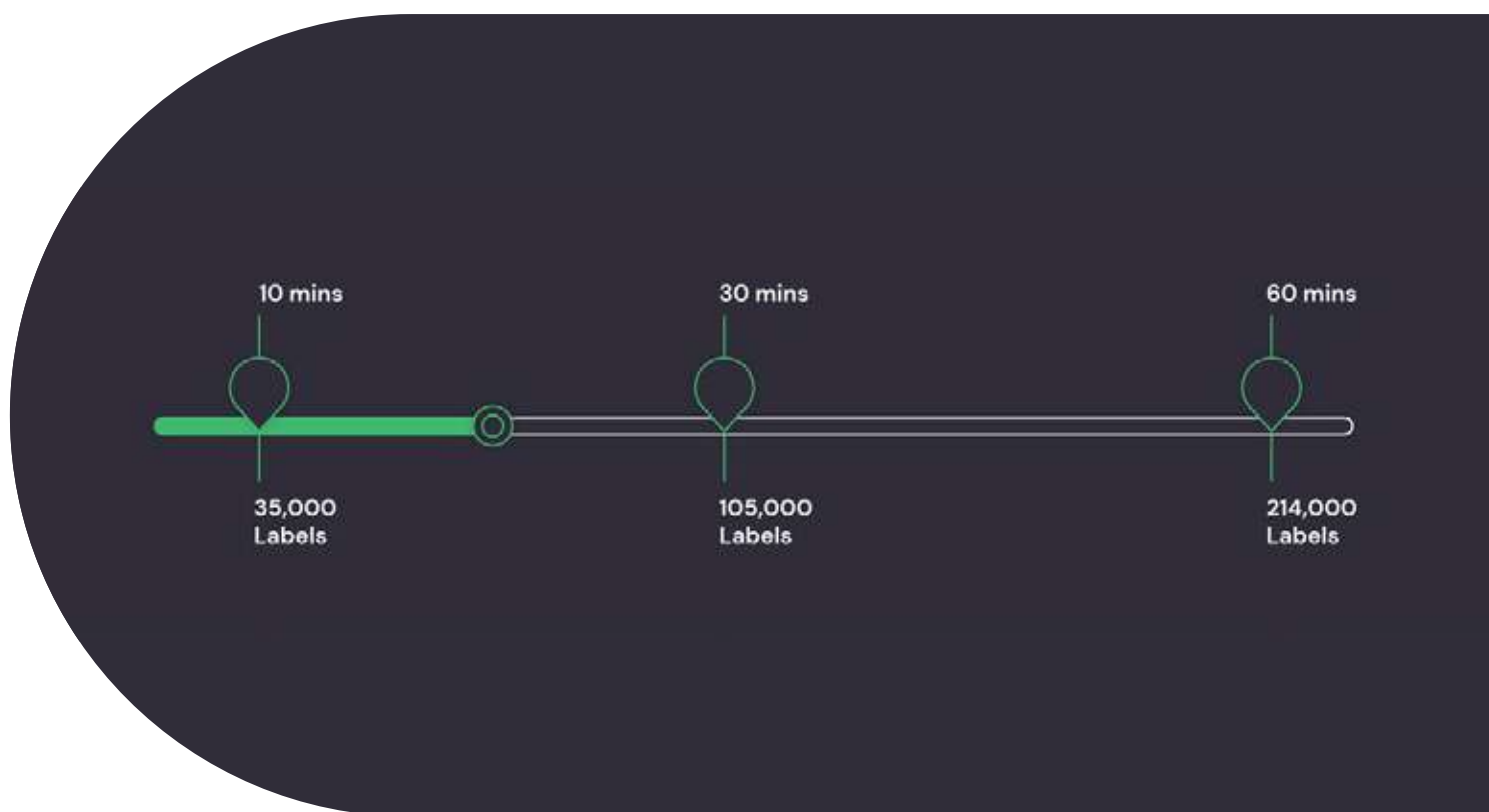
Rather than relying on editors parsing a few descriptive keywords, the level of specificity delivered by this kind of ingestion process allows for true searchable transparency. It becomes possible to search archive material very similarly to how "Ctrl+F" allows you to search text documents.

Users can search for things like "brick building with fire escape", "two people with a cat", "Lion in jungle", "girl using phone". Every line of dialogue in a video can be automatically transcribed and included in its metadata, so searching for clips of people saying specific things becomes a piece of cake. Users can also search using eCommerce-style faceted search filters. Finally, by using facial recognition software, it becomes possible to search your assets for specific people.
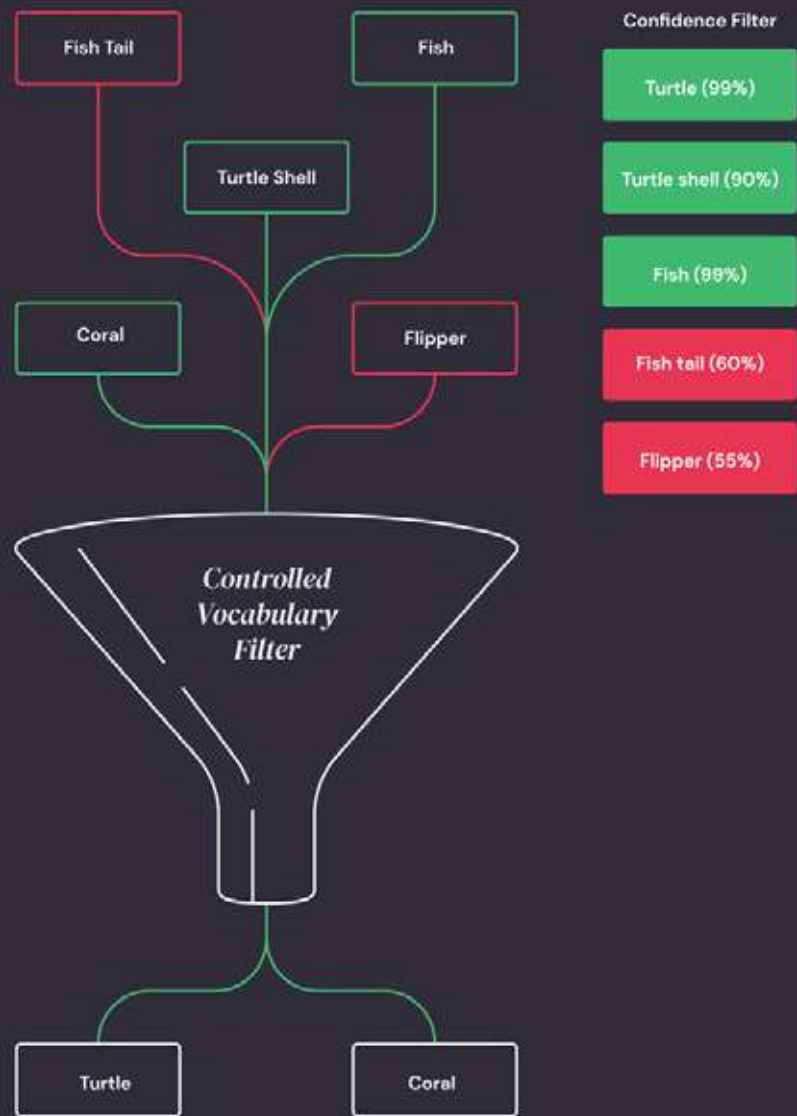
Object detection is a still-evolving technology — generally only able to achieve 65%- 80% accuracy. Presently, in order to ensure accuracy, these tags have to be cross-checked by media managers. On its own, this can create a problem. AI-enabled VAM will add tags to each and every frame. Using standard frame-rates, that's up to 214,000 tags per hour of footage.

Advanced VAM will group sequential frames with matching tags together, and present them as a single result, rather than each frame being its own result. Combined with the use of controlled vocabulary filters, this dramatically reduces review volumes. The next step is to deploy confidence filters so that media managers are only presented with a list of uncertain tags to check — preventing a 'data deluge'.

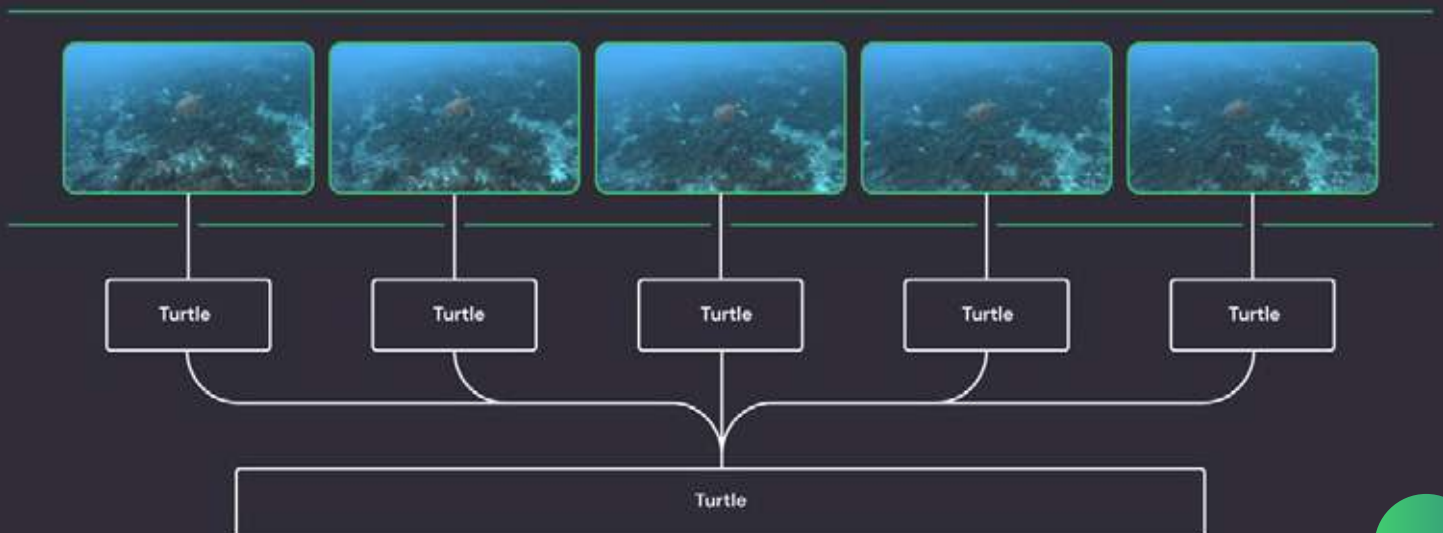With confidence filters, AI-enhanced tools allow for the rapid creation of highly descriptive metadata tags. The speed at which tags can be created and checked even makes it possible to retrospectively apply this technology to archived material. Enabled by AI, huge volumes of data can be categorized, and human productivity maximized.

| 10 mins | 30 mins | 60 mins |
| 35,000 Labels | 105,000 Labels | 214,000 Labels |

How VAM can filter advanced metadata results

Fish Tail	Fish

	Turtle Shell	

Confidence Filter

- Turtle (99%)
- Turtle shell (90%)
- Fish (98%)
- Fish tail (60%)
- Flipper (55%)

Coral	Flipper

Controlled Vocabulary Filter

Turtle	Coral

Grouping sequential frames as single assets

Turtle	Turtle	Turtle	Turtle	Turtle

Turtle

3. Streamlined and secure collaboration

VAM should not only help with ingest and archive access, it should help streamline production workflows. Access to a dynamic archive is the first step, and access to descriptive metadata tags can transform your organizational strategies. But the last big hurdle that VAM can help you overcome is file-sharing and remote collaboration.

Even sharing video files can be a big task. The size of most video files means that they can't be sent as email attachments, and require the use of dedicated file-sharing services. But this isn't a great solution for a number of reasons. It can be insecure and it creates administrative steps — exporting and uploading, and the creation of multiple copies of the same files. Lastly, it doesn't deliver real-time collaboration.

In order to achieve real collaboration in your video editing workflows, you need to create proxies. If you want to do that securely, you need a system that can track and control access. VAM can do both of these things.

- **Proxies and conforming:** Proxies are highly-compressed copies of master files that are time stamped with exact frame accuracy to the master. This means that after a proxy is edited, a high-resolution version of the new edit can be automatically generated from the master through a process called conforming.

  Using proxies allows you to deploy lossy compression, reducing master file sizes by up to 98%, but still then transfer all edits made back to high-resolution. If you want to engage in real-time cloud editing, this is an absolute necessity.

  The creation and management of proxies can become complex and require a lot of administrative attention. With several different copies being created and used, it's essential to keep track of what changes are made and make sure people are working with the right versions. VAM platforms automate such tracking.

Using advanced VAM software, proxies can be created and conformed automatically, making it far simpler to use them and ensuring accuracy to the exact frame rate of the master. VAM enables easy cloud sharing and also offers version tracking, so everyone stays on the same page. Advanced VAM can then conform those proxies in the cloud, reducing strain on your on-premises infrastructure.

- **Security:** Footage being leaked or "stolen" is an obvious concern for video production companies. But it can be of equal concern in advertising, and leaked internal comms videos can create embarrassment. You need to make sure that the video production system you set up is secure. VAM can help you deliver that from a technical and process basis.

  The most basic level of security is encryption. Most modern VAM systems provide the option to encrypt all data transfers and even your archive material. However, 90% of data breaches are about human error — not technical failures. VAM can help you here as well.

  A properly outfitted VAM system provides visibility overall users' access and offers automated permissions controls. You can create preset levels of access, then customize individual users' access when needed. VAM software can prevent users from downloading files, and also provides watermarks to prevent screen capture — unique watermarks engineered to indicate the specific individual responsible for the breach, if one occurs.

![ipv logo]

4. Investing in the right VAM tool

The goal of VAM is to augment and improve the entire video production and archive process. The actual act of editing won't occur within a VAM. However, quality VAM solutions integrate directly into editing suites like Adobe Premiere Pro, Avid Media Composer or Final Cut.

One critical thing you should investigate when looking into VAM tools is how they will mesh with your editing software of choice. There is significant value in a solution that can integrate directly, allowing your editors to stay in the creative flow — maintaining access to proxies and the advanced search and automation capabilities provided by a VAM without ever leaving the interface they are used to using.

Moreover, the important thing to consider when investigating VAM systems are the features that you need. From our perspective, the real starting point for an advanced VAM system is a dynamic archive that merges both production and archive environments. Without that, many of the benefits of advanced production and ingest tools (like object detection) are limited. From there, you should consider the kinds of workflows that you want to engage in, and how other elements of VAM can help you deliver those outcomes.

Step 3: Build a workflow

The right hardware and software resources are the bedrock of your video production system. But workflows transform that technical investment into real outcomes. Technology only gets you through the door, while process delivers the change required to scale your video production.

Streamlining is key. You need to maximize your access to resources, and make growing your video teams as easy as possible. You should look to improve your ability to collaborate over distance, empower your staff to work where they want, and automate administrative tasks.

A technologically-empowered workflow will let you do more with fewer people and access the best talent across the globe. It's important to remember that matching volume demands of a modern video strategy is only the first step. Creating quality video requires having the time and resources to invest in creativity.

There are four key elements that you need to look to achieve in a workflow that can operate at scale:

1. Remote access and freelancers

The modern workforce is increasingly uninterested in being stuck in the office. High-skilled employees expect opportunities to work from home. What's more, the best talent may not reside within an easy commute distance of your offices. If you want to get your hands on the best editors and creative minds for your video projects, you need to offer them flexibility.

Cloud-sharing delivers the remote access you need to expand where you let in-house staff work and who you can bring on board your team. It also allows much more flexibility to engage with freelancers. This lets you bring onboard talented individuals that you might not need all of the time, broadening your video production skill set on-demand. You wouldn't want to hire a lot of new employees for a particularly large project when you won't necessarily need those people next week.

Freelancers aren't always cheaper on a day-to-day basis. But you will be able to access talent that you couldn't afford full-time when it's needed. On a more on-going basis, freelancers and full-time remote staff let you keep down costs in other ways — removing the overheads of office space and equipment.

What you need to do: You need technology to create smooth and seamless remote access of video files. You also have to make sure that this is all done securely. That means VAM and quality broadband. You need the ability to track access, apply watermarks and set permissions. You need an automated way to create proxies and conform edits back to masters. Then you need to build processes and systems around the hiring of freelancers and take the opportunities to provide work-space flexibility to your in-house teams.

2. Streamlined collaboration and experimentation

Video production is a creative process. Creativity blossoms when experimentation is allowed. It also benefits from more than one perspective. You want to create a video production environment in which experimentation and collaboration is encouraged and maximized.

What you need to do: If you want true collaboration, you need cloud-based editing. The answer here is actually very similar to what will allow you to engage with freelancers. It means investing in a VAM tool that can automate the creation of proxies and automate the processes required for real-time editing.

Simple file sharing solutions can help with collaboration. But they don't create a single file that can be remotely accessed by multiple users. That means true collaboration is still out of reach, and it means the creation of a number of administrative steps that damages efficiency. It becomes necessary to keep track of a wide number of file versions, each of which takes up more space on your system.

But simply having the remote-access technology to enable collaboration is not enough. You need to encourage your teams to work together on single projects and put to good use their ability to make changes, restore old versions and work together to create the best outcome.

3. Repurposing of assets

The larger your archive of video assets, the more likely you will be able to reuse or repurpose material you already made or purchased in the past, rather than paying for new material. Some footage you have can be used again and again, and this can even help make your brand more recognizable. If you initially created longer, multifaceted videos that thoroughly express your brand, material from those videos or their outtakes can be utilized again to make unique but related shorter videos.

Additionally, an older video can later be tweaked for reuse on different platforms. For example, Instagram only allows videos of 60 seconds or less, and on Twitter, the max is just over double that at 2 minutes and 20 seconds. Facebook users enjoy longer videos but are much less likely to watch lengthy videos than are visitors to YouTube. With a different optimal length for each platform, it's sensible to adapt your videos to multiple versions of different lengths.

What you need to do: Being able to monetize your archives and put them to good use again and again comes down to metadata, archive access and cultural incentives. Metadata is key to understanding what you have. Without detailed and descriptive metadata, you will never be able to find the right clip and put it to use. You need detailed ingest processes that capture and record metadata in systematic and uniform ways. Ideally, you want advanced VAM software that can deploy object detection and voice recognition to maximize the searchability of your archive.

VAM also delivers archive accessibility. If you want to seamlessly search for and reuse archive assets, you want them right at your fingertips within a production environment. That means dynamic archives that centralize both production and archive environments.

Lastly, you need to make sure that people are using technology for these purposes. That comes down to training, praise for creative use of archive assets, and a culture that simply values creative repurposing of assets you already have.

4. Efficiency and automation

The more elements of your workflow that can be automated, the more you'll be able to focus on creativity. You want to make it quick and easy to share projects, remove manual steps in ingest, reduce the number of copies created and simplify communication. By doing this, you'll reduce costs, increase how effective people are and free them to focus on adding value where it's most needed.

What you need to do: This really does come down to technology. The cultural elements hinge on making sure that the technology is used to its maximum potential. Make sure that cloud-based collaboration is embraced. Where possible, extend the use of cloud technology from editing to review, making it as simple as possible to get final approval of projects without making multiple copies.

Centralizing your access to assets is, again, key to simplicity. The less movement between different environments, the more efficient the system. Deploy technology to automate ingest, metadata creation and more. Make sure tools integrate wherever possible and deliver end-to-end simplicity. A good VAM is really the central element of this kind of efficient, streamlined workflow that will really let you scale your operations when needed.

Using video for brand communication

Once you have developed an IT system and workflow process able to scale, the next step is to deploy video with a purpose. The first element that we're going to explore is marketing and using video to communicate the value and 'attitude' of your brand.

Principles of effective video marketing

If you want to succeed with video marketing, there are six important principles that you should follow:

1. Keep it short

For online videos, one of the most important considerations is length. One–fifth of viewers abandon a video within the first 10 seconds. That's the amount of time you have to engage your audience. Your video should immediately address its viewer's first concern: "why should I watch this?" Whether because it will inspire them, make them laugh, or answer their burning question, give them the confidence that it's worth it from the first second.

Get to the substance of your video right away. Keep your opening logos and theme music as short as possible — think in terms of microseconds. This is important to grab your viewer's attention, and if you want them to watch a number of your videos in a row, the longer your opening matter is, the more they will resent its repetition.
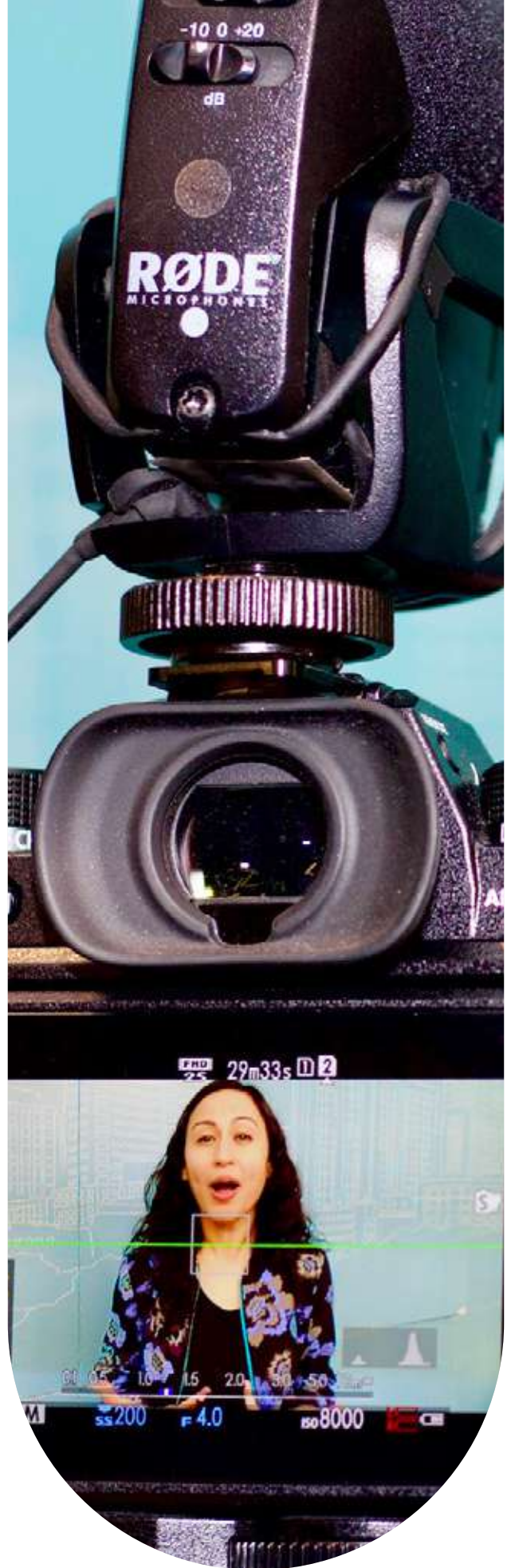
2. Match the pacing with the audience

Related to length is the question of pacing. This will, of course, depend on the amount and type of information being covered, but the proper pace is always a major consideration. Effective videos move quickly, but not so quickly as to be confusing.

Usually, you'll want to prioritize speed. Your videos should never bore the viewer, and a slow pace or dragged-out opening is the surest way to make that happen. If you can't move through the material quickly enough without it feeling cluttered, you probably have too much in there and should try to streamline it.

3. Engage with all senses

The major strength of video is its ability to engage multiple senses at once. Don't miss any opportunity to do so. Movement, light, color, sound, music, and the speed and rhythms of editing are all assets to be considered for every video project.

Audio, text, and graphics should be used to provide incidental information without interrupting the flow of the video. For example, rather than having a character recite a statistic, which consumes valuable screen time and often sounds unwieldy, that statistic can be superimposed as text or an infographic. This allows you to streamline what the viewer is supposed to be paying the most attention to, and leave the asides where they belong: on the side.

4. Make it feel real

With few exceptions, allow your characters' natural speech to be used as much as possible. Video excels at showing real people, realistically. Especially today, as we encounter more and more candid video material, viewers can spot when dialogue is overly written or heavy-handed. What looks natural on the page often sounds wrong when spoken, especially if you're using non-professional actors. Today's consumers are savvy, and especially dislike disingenuous or fake-seeming material. Very often, it's a good principal to let people speak for themselves.

5. Never be boring

Not every subject is most effectively handled with a light touch, but remember: people typically want nothing more than to be entertained, and are constantly on the lookout for ways they can achieve that satisfaction. There are many varieties of entertainment, and you should ensure that your videos always contain at least one of them. In a plugged-in world with thousands of choices vying for attention, to be boring is to go unheard.

6. Tell a story

Storytelling is key to not being boring, and it's also key to connecting on an emotional level. Contemporary marketing psychology understands that it is stories, far more than facts or figures, that influence buyers' decisions.

The basic elements of a story will be familiar to you: a person with a desire or goal must overcome a conflict to achieve it. The most mundane scenarios can be made interesting by embedding them into this structure. Whenever possible, tell a story in your video. Video is perfectly optimized for storytelling.

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A story and its parts: brand storytelling explained

Brand storytelling is a way of marketing that uses the art of narrative to reach your audiences and give your brand a recognizable, relatable character. Obviously, video excels above other forms of communication for telling stories in the modern age, as attested historically by the gradual dominance of first film, then television, and now online videos over competing media.

Besides the possibility of showing a literal "plot" for customers to relate to on-screen, video offers a variety of subtler storytelling techniques geared towards expressing mood, atmosphere, feelings, and the all-important aesthetic sensibilities for your audience to recognize and relate to.

Light, color, sound, music, and the speed and rhythms of editing combine into a multi-sensory experience, and each of these various components of the video medium is an opportunity to strengthen your brand. Moving the viewer to recognize your brand in the essence of the video is key, and every design decision involved in your videos — from shot composition, colors, fonts, voices, music, actors, the general sensibility or aesthetic — contributes to driving your brand home for the viewer, making your company's a name they'll remember.

Whenever possible, take the opportunity to subtly remind viewers whose video they're enjoying.

Building the right narrative

Picking all of the lighting and tempo choices required to convey your brand is an evolving process. You should consult with creative specialists to help. But a lot of those choices come down to the narrative and story that you want to tell — it comes down to deciding what your brand stands for and who it serves.

Start by considering:

1. What is your brand offering?
2. What need does that fulfill? / What problem does it solve?
3. Who has this problem/need?

Having answered those questions, you have, in reverse order, the crucial elements of a story: a person, problem, and solution.

Step 1: Who is your customer?

The "hero" of your story represents your customer, and you must offer a character your audience can identify with. In a short piece such as a marketing video, a group of people can stand-in for the individual just as well. The important thing is that they look, sound, or act in ways that your audience can relate to.

This isn't limited to mirroring your audience in superficial details like age or clothing style (although this can be important). Any likeable traits can make a character engaging, even an outlandish one. Humorousness is especially effective. So, your characters should appeal to your audience as being either like them, or unlike them in a pleasing way.

Step 2: What do they want?

This is where you address your customers' desires and challenges. Of course, the desire of your characters could simply be whatever it is your product offers. Or, their goal could be something more abstract but still relatable, such as fitting in with a certain group, or having a lifestyle they'd prefer.

Simplicity is key to video marketing, so companies offering a product with more complicated or specialized uses might be advised not to lean on this straightforward story approach. The actual conflict of your video's story doesn't have to relate to your product in a literal way. It should, however, be relatable to your audience.

Step 3: How do they get it?

By showing your character trying to achieve their goal, you strengthen the audience's emotional connection to your character as they become invested in the outcome. In other words, it becomes *their own* desired outcome.

It goes without saying that a positive outcome is crucial to a successful marketing video. So, the story comes to an end when the character either achieves their goal or has an unexpected gain as a result of their journey — in which case, the original goal has become irrelevant. The latter is an effective way to resolve a narrative in a surprising way.

What is possible with a good story

There are an inexhaustible variety of ways to incorporate these story fundamentals into your video content. Even a video of a person simply speaking to the camera can be structured in such a way as to suggest a narrative, and become more engaging because of it.

For example, a representative of your company can explain why the company was founded in the first place: to address a need not currently being met. Similarly, consider a video wherein a customer explains a problem they were having and the solution they found: your product. In both cases we have a character/problem/solution story built-in, and with the right choice of details, this structure can be emphasized.

People want stories. Use your marketing content to provide them.

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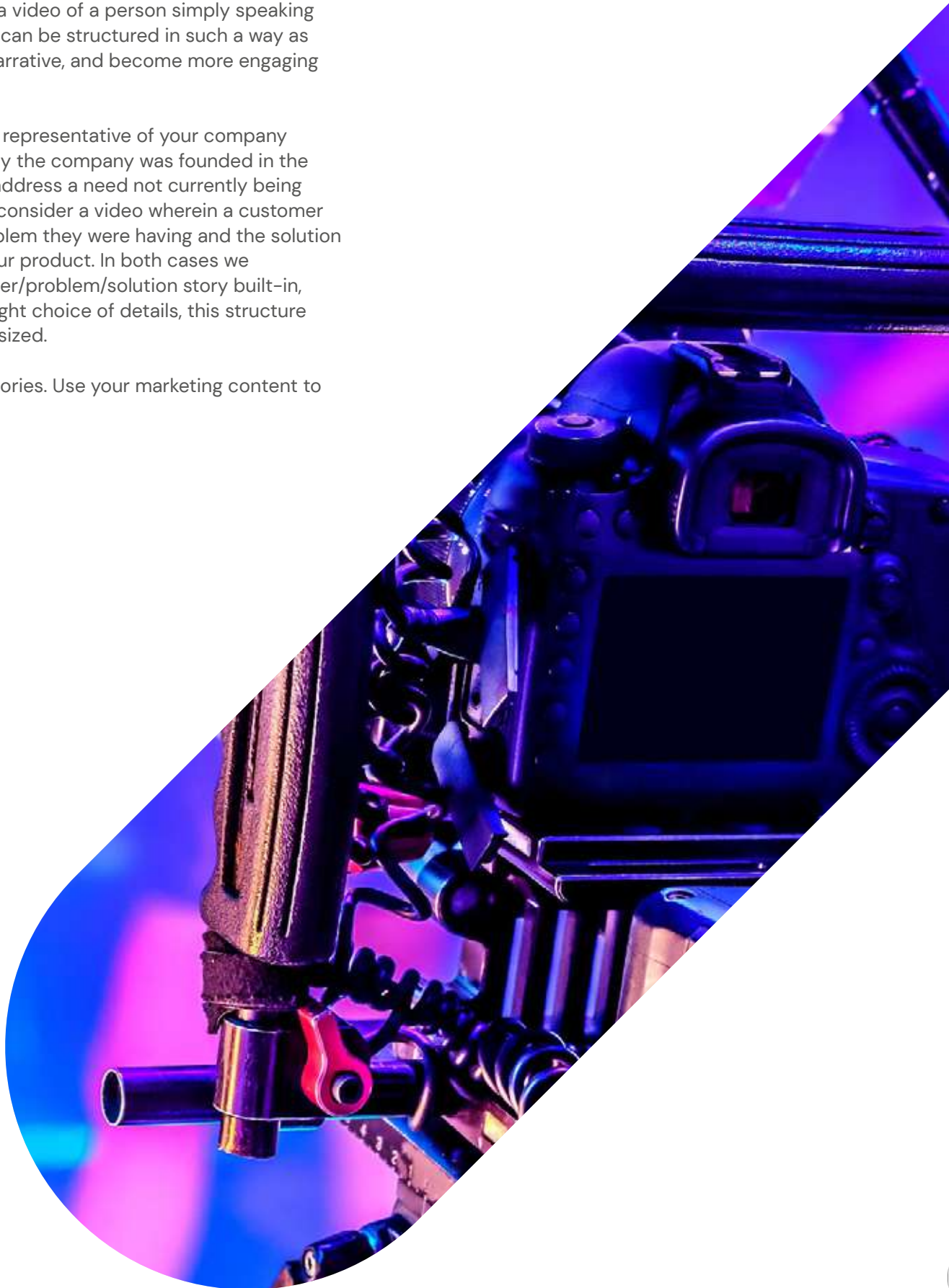
Using video to improve customer experience

Customer experience is the field of understanding and managing the perception customers have of your brand through how they interact with it. The foundation of customer experience is the recognition that the customer's subjective experience of your brand constitutes their reality, and the only reality that matters is the reality of your customer.

Every way in which customers interact with your brand forms a part of their experience, beginning with their response to your marketing and their engagement with your website, to their use of your product, and how your company follows up. Video can play a leading role in each of these stages.

Person to person — at scale

The personal touch at scale is one of video's greatest assets, and the most important idea in customer experience: that they are ultimately interacting with another person. Anything that reminds your customer of this is good. Depending on your product, target customer, and brand image, it may be more or less appropriate to incorporate humor and entertainment into your videos. In any case, make them feel personal.

How to make customer experience videos

Make a list of the key pain points your customers have using your product, renewing your product, changing services, finding the answers to their questions, etc. Each of these points can be the subject of one or more videos.

By providing customers with a video for every one of their concerns, you reduce the burden on your customer service staff immeasurably. You also conform to the expectations of customers. As we have addressed, 68% of customers would actually rather watch a video than speak with customer services teams. Home Depot, for example, has had tremendous success deploying VAM to creatively improve customer experiences.

Stage 1: How to use your product

Make a video demonstrating the customer's first steps after purchasing your product. The days of printed instructions are numbered, as people often go straight to an instructional video online without even looking at them.

As anyone who has assembled a product from printed instructions knows, a slightly complicated procedure can be extremely difficult to describe in words, even with graphic aids. A video, however, can demonstrate exactly how to do something with no ambiguity, whether it's physical assembly or installation, a process done on a computer, or exactly how to use the product.

A strong approach to the instructional video is to show clear video footage of each individual step, perhaps from multiple different angles in particularly complicated cases, accompanied by narration explaining the action. You should also include asides for additional clarity if needed. This combination of narration and video demonstration is proven to be effective for imparting a thorough understanding of the instruction.

Always present each step in the exact order that your customer would be experiencing them. This should go without saying, but is often overlooked by designers who are experts regarding the product. Assume little to no prior knowledge on the part of the viewer. The bottom line concern must always be that the viewer can follow the instructions to the end with no confusion or unanswered questions.

Stage 2: Further assistance

Addressing Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) is a perfect candidate for the video approach. Many companies now post answers to questions written in by customers as a regular feature of their website. This is a great way to stay in constant touch with customers, as well as impart a sense of your company's responsibility to them— the sense that their questions and concerns will be addressed.

Any questions a customer might have are good topics for a video, including how to find more help if they need it. An affable person simply answering the questions can be perfectly adequate, but you might look for opportunities to add graphics and animation or other visual aids to make the video more engaging.

Having an array of videos that answer questions and demonstrate troubleshooting can drastically cut down the amount of direct support customers require. One video can be used in place of potentially thousands of help calls, allowing your business to vastly scale its customer support.

Stage 3: The next level

Another topic particularly suitable to regular video posts is information about your business and products that goes beyond the standard details. Features of a product that are not immediately apparent, or uses for it that are not obvious, are great subjects for 'next level' or 'power user' videos.

Then there are informative, 'did you know' style videos. These could be in the form of factoids, history, or anecdotes relating to your company or product. Interesting details can appeal to people's desire to learn new things, and stories about your company and products go a long way to help customers relate to your brand. The key, in any case, is to focus on people above all else.

This kind of video content is not only great for new customers, it can be a valuable asset within a **customer loyalty program.** If you make quality, helpful content, you can use that to stay in touch with customers and ad value to that interaction.

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Using your video library to deliver

The key to quickly turning out a large number of customer experience videos is to have a substantial library of material to draw from. These videos will normally be very short, and can often utilize some of the same material. With enough footage in your back catalog, it will be possible to address customer's concerns as they become apparent to you without having to shoot anything new at all.

Having your archives be transparent and easily searchable is necessary for this, however. You'll also want your archives to be fully integrated with your editing software. This is why investing in a proper VAM system is so important to a company seeking to grow their video output.

Using video for onboarding and employee engagement

As we've discussed, with its superior effectiveness for communicating information, video is the ideal medium for instruction. This is not limited to consumers. Video tutorials offer a highly efficient way to get new hires up to speed.

Why use video for onboarding?

It's cost-effective: Using video in training employees reduces costs by removing the necessity to have an expert present. This is especially helpful in cases where employees work from home, an increasingly common and desired condition, or simply when a business has multiple locations or stores. It also allows for greater consistency, as all employees regardless of their location have access to the same training.

It's on-demand: A major asset of training videos is that they are available to employees on-demand. A new hire doesn't have to wait for anyone else before they can learn what they need to do the job. The video is right there, they can even watch before day one of work. They can rewatch training videos whenever they wish to refresh themselves at work, from home, on their commute or anywhere else.

It's consistent: Another benefit of video onboarding is consistency — information delivered exactly the same every time for maximum effectiveness. Not every person responsible for training new hires is the best trainer in the world, and even the best have their off days.

There's always the chance that in the unpredictable real-life setting of a training event some information may not be covered, or that some discrepancies might creep in. Especially with larger groups, there's a possibility that some employees will leave without a full grasp of all the material. With a little extra time taken to craft the perfect training video, your training sessions can be at their absolute best every single time.

It's efficient: Video offers more efficient training. New hires can go through the material at their own speed. If an employee needs to see information repeated, they can rewatch the video without slowing things down for anyone else. On the other hand, their own time is not cluttered up with the repetition of questions from other new hires that they already know the answer to.

It's personal: In order to scale up their onboarding, many companies resort to training sessions with large groups of new hires. Despite the element of live human contact, these onboarding sessions are actually perceived as less personal than video, which is closer in experience to one-on-one training, in many ways the ideal educational scenario. Video offers the best of both worlds, as new hires are provided direct and detailed instruction from an expert that can be provided to a potentially infinite number of employees.

What video onboarding lacks compared to face-to-face training sessions is the ability for new hires to ask and get answers to direct questions in the moment. With good organization, strong search features, and plenty of FAQ-style help, this essential facet can be emulated by video onboarding.

Every question your new hire might have should be covered somewhere and should be easily accessible in an intuitive way. Of course, it's best for the employee to have access to a manager or HR contact if they really need to speak with someone, but good video onboarding makes this a seldom-used last resort, and opens the ability for a company to massively scale their employee training.

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It goes beyond training: Integrating a new hire into your company is about more than just proficiency at their tasks. In addition to job training, videos can be used to explain other items that may be of use for an employee, such as details pertaining to their contract, or benefits such as insurance and paid time off, or the company's history, mission and culture. These factors are essential to bringing a new hire into the fold, and will ensure that everyone is on the same page.

Great employees have goals, and videos are a great way to introduce goals and keep employees on track by recognizing their accomplishments. The unique personal touch afforded by video will ensure that employees feel valued and appreciated for the effort and continual improvements.

How to start a video onboarding program

Starting a video onboarding program is actually very straight forward. It's about creating video content for each stage of the process. Effectively, work to augment or replace every step within your current onboarding process with a video.

Stage 1: Welcome

The first video for your new hire should be a short, personal one that welcomes them to the company. This could be a spoken message from an owner, founder, or other spokesperson thanking the employee for joining. Something of your company's mission and culture should be included.

Stage 2: The first day

An employee can only take in so much information at once, especially on their first day. You want to orient them to their new job without intimidating them.

This is a good time to show them engaging videos about the essential, high-level details of the company. This includes a sense of the company's goals and personality, as well as an introduction to their specific role and how it relates to the overall structure.

At the end of their first day, send a video that presents the new hire a list of onboarding goals. This is a great way to quickly convey your expectations in a friendly way.

For the first day's videos, it's especially important to make them engaging. You want your new hire to be excited about their future with you.

Stage 3: The first month

At this point, your new employee is ready to learn more detailed information about their job and the specific department they're in.

As soon as the employee understands their job, you need videos to show new hires how to set up their technology and work-related systems, how to use equipment, and anything else they need to know to get started.

Everything an employee needs to know about their work should be covered in a video, including instruction concerning all of their tasks, what the company's

expectations are, how they are supposed to work with a team or management, details about the structure of their company, etc. Work with the most knowledgeable members of your staff along with training specialists to cover all the essential details. Remember, investing in great training videos allows you to scale training endlessly.

Rather than dumping all the information on the employee at once, it can be wise to pace the content throughout their first 30 days or so. This gives them more time to learn and retain in-depth material. Of course, they should always have access to the videos they've seen in order to review as needed.

Stage 4: The future

A cornerstone of the "onboarding" concept is that it is an ongoing process. As tasks and goals for the employee changes, videos remain an invaluable way to instruct them.

General tips for effective employee onboarding

Every company will have different requirements for their onboarding process. But here are some general tips for creating good onboarding videos:

Make them short: Attention spans are not endless. Keeping your videos short ensures your new hire will stay engaged throughout the entire video, and on to the next one. It's always better to have many short videos than a few long ones.

Make them concise: The information you want to impart should be clear, complete, and to the point. Keep each video focused on one topic, and present it as straightforwardly as possible.

Make them accessible: Your employee needs to be able to find the information they're looking for, and the more quickly they can do that the better. Proper organization of the videos is obviously essential, and a search function is even better. Clear titles and thorough tags are key.

Effective video onboarding demands the creation of lots of videos. But with the right software to manage your video assets, the process becomes a seamless one and so that much more worth the investment.

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# *Conclusion: Video growth and the future of communication*

The power of video comes down to your ability to engage and communicate at scale. Whether it's applying video to marketing, customer loyalty, customer experience or employee onboarding — the goal is really the same. You want to use video to replicate the emotional connection of a face-to-face interaction without the logistical cost. Video lets you close distances, scale interactions and bring consistency, quality and on-demand convenience that is not possible in person.

The challenges of growth through video are actually an advantage. Coping with storage, sorting through files and managing the costs of video production can all hold back your adoption of video for communication — but they hold back your competitors as well.

A quality VAM system resolves each of these challenges under one roof — providing a tool for archive and production control, right through to distribution and publishing. VAM makes the creation of metadata simple by automating basic metadata collection at ingest. Then, it improves your ability to search and sort assets around metadata criteria by prompting standardized categories.

Technology is never an answer on its own. It can only open the door to new ways of working. The real magic behind any business is the people getting the job done. Once you build the technological solution needed, you need to invest in your people. You need to find the top talent that can tell your brand's story, make the right creative choices and craft a compelling narrative. You need people who can adopt the latest collaborative working practices and rise to the opportunities presented by modern video production workflows.

With the right tools and people at your disposal, your company will be set up to scale no matter how much the demand for videos grow. And if one thing is certain, it's that the demand for video will grow. Get started and get planning.

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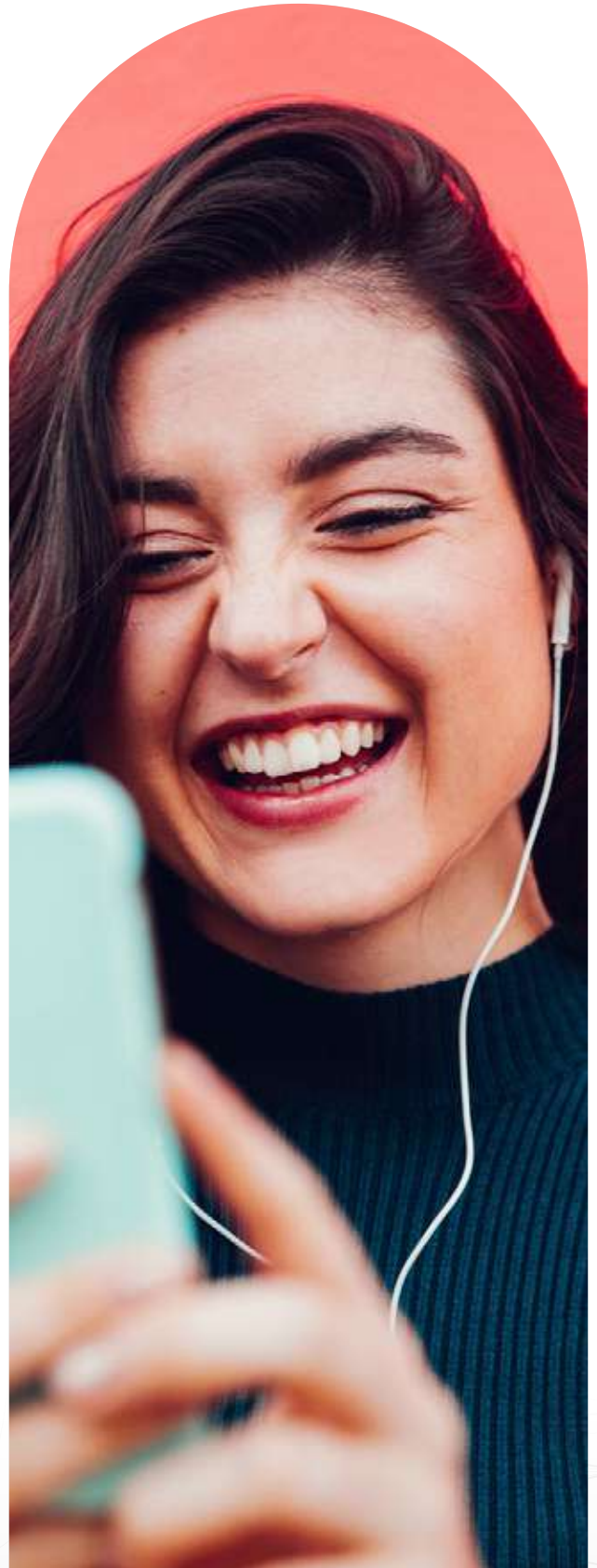
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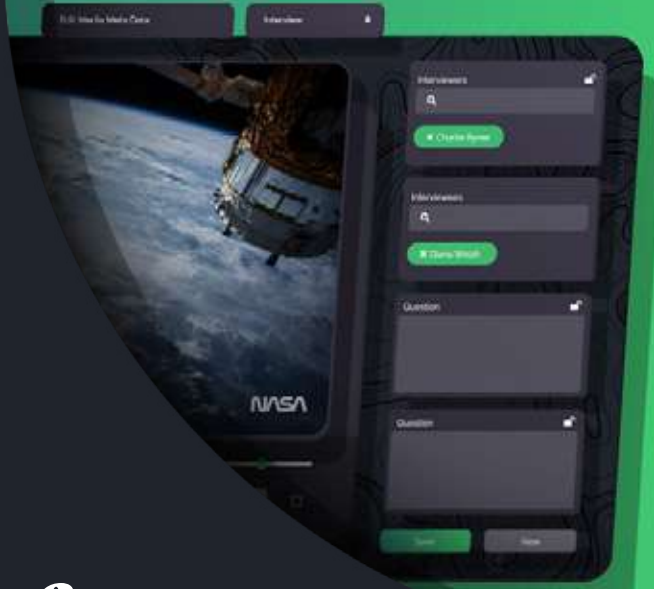
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At IPV, we are committed to creating simple, secure and analytics-enhanced video production workflows. Curator is our flagship video asset management solution, bringing dynamic archive control, cloud-enabled collaboration and partnerships with leading-edge detection technology.

Curator delivers asset visibility, centralized security and automated ingest. End-to-end integrations mean that Curator works with your editing software and can upload straight to OTT. With secure collaboration built-in, Curator can transform your video production and archive management. We are serious about video — Curator is the content platform trusted by the best in the world ... and beyond!

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