

The Big Snore

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A Census of Video on Professional Services Websites

We assume the rapid saturation of video across the Internet is not news to our readers. But if you need to embolden your organization's truculent leaders to jump on the video bandwagon, more information might be helpful. We don't want to drown you in stats that may be interesting but less than helpful. To wallow in data, go to [101 Online Video Stats to Make Your Eyes Glaze Over](#). Here you will learn the trend is up, up, up. Just two examples:

- "82.5% of the U.S. Internet audience viewed a video online" (ComScore, February 2011).
- Viewers watched 75% more videos online in December 2010 than December 2008 (ComScore, February 2011).

It's so tempting to drown you in facts, hoping we might convert unbelievers to the power of video versus words on the Internet – pay close attention: Not "over words," but "over words on the Internet." Remember the Internet is a medium in and of itself. Words are a medium within a medium. Video, this giant experiment in communication, has already taught us that communication speed outpaces other communication criteria. For example, beautiful writing in the *New Yorker* is a fine wine to be savored. We can follow its nose, its nooks and crannies over pages. The Internet is all, now. Maximum efficiency. Instantaneous.

Efficiency

This is a teaching interlude. Hang on – it's worth it.

Communication is hard. Some would aver that the single biggest challenge in organizational performance is poor communication. As a result, communication has been studied inside and out, upside and down.

- We are organized into communication types (Meyers Briggs, DISC,

Red/Blue/Yellow/Green, etc.).

- We are taught communication strategies (Talk So Kids Will Listen, Situation-Behavior-Impact, Drama Triangle, Walk the Talk, etc.).
 - We learn that very little communication is accomplished through words.
 - We are nudged toward bulleted lists, tables, charts, maps and diagrams that communicate visually on the ancient premise that a picture is worth a thousand words.
 - We realize that few of us actually communicate well. That's why only a few rainmakers exist in any organization.
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The most efficient communication delivery system is person-to-person, but even this is significantly flawed. A substitute, *with the ability to minimize flaws, is video.*

Keep reading. This argument is building: One important goal of professional services marketing is to preview what it's like to work with you. Short of meeting you, video comes closest.

Another factor: There are no rational decisions, only emotional decisions. (There isn't enough time in this article to prove this to be true. See [Reptilian Brain](#) in our Big Ideas on our site.) We connect person-to-person emotionally. A great video of you is a super-efficient sales tool.

48 hours of video are uploaded every minute, resulting in nearly 8 years of content uploaded everyday. ([101 Online Video Stats to Make Your Eyes Glaze Over, 2011](#)).

Over 3 billion videos are viewed a day. More video is uploaded to YouTube in one month than the 3 major US networks created in 60 years. ([101 Online Video Stats to Make Your Eyes Glaze Over, 2011](#)).

Study: *What's happening on professional services sites, with a close look at the largest 100 law firms?*

No surprise that professional services are slow on the uptake. If we were to guess, we suspect unfamiliarity with video is the culprit. Few have a videographer on staff or even in the neighborhood. That's just the technology gap. The creative/excellence gap is, well, wider. Here's the video adoption research we found with a census of law firm, accounting and consulting firm websites:

Finding 1: Video on career pages dominates sites

Big whoop, right? 26 of 100 websites had video on their website. 53 had no video. Video is trickling into "About the Firm" pages (9). Some smart marketers prepared videos for diversity sections (2) and client service (1). Three offered video on their homepages. Compare this to your experience on the sites you visit most often. Behind the times, right? One thing we've noticed in judging websites recently is that we compare them against all the sites we experience, not just those in professional services. The narrow vertical of our industry is not

representative of our web experience, nor our website demands.

Online video ad spending will swell from \$1.97 billion to \$5.71 billion by 2014. ([Cisco Visual Networking Index, 2011](#)).

Finding 2: Video production values are slim

Usually, Oscars are given to films with pretty high production values. If you ever had a friend who worked in the “industry” then you waited for the credits to end before you left your seat. A great film usually demands a lot of talent. But not always. Creativity trumps every technical skill, which is why *Night of the Living Dead* enjoys a perennial renaissance. It was brilliant and raw.

Unfortunately, most professional services video is just raw. “Brilliant” walks among the damned. Hiring a videographer delivers video but not quality video, certainly no Oscar. So let’s outline the keys to great video:

1. Creativity

An idea. It would be nice to have an idea before we shout “roll camera.” Otherwise, your feature is a quick sequel to *Night of the Living Dead*, derisively known as the *Day of the Talking Heads*.

Creativity comes in all shapes and guises. Creativity can be a videographic style, an organizing theme, an editing scheme, a pace, color, etc. But you can’t start without it.

2. Videography (Cinematography)

Woody Allen always works with cinematographer Gordon Willis for a reason. Author (auteur) and photographer (visualiste) are sympatico. The visions are aligned. But it is not the videographer who has the vision; it’s the director, the creator.

3. Sound

You don’t notice it unless you do, of course. Background music well done is invisible but it augments the emotion. Ever bought the soundtrack from a film? That’s just one production value that’s missing from professional service videos. The ping-ding of metallica is not only less than satisfying; it’s annoying. Original music is actually not that difficult to do or find.

4. Length

Again, with a well-organized script, it's amazing the insight that can be shared in less than two minutes. If you feel pinched, look at creating a Part I and Part II as an alternative.

5. Actors

We left actors for last because your actors are usually the professionals. The variety of skill shown by each professional is mind-boggling. Some are naturals in front of the camera; some freeze and no resume can predict who will fight or fright. A great director can make all the difference between disaster and a great result.

By 30 seconds into an online video up to 33% of viewers have moved on; at 1 minute 44% have left (regardless of the clip's length) and almost 60% have abandoned by the 2 minute mark.

Annotated Survey Results

We matched these results against a similar survey from two years ago and found:

- **The average length of a video is wisely brief**

Length of Video 2.85 minutes.

- **Videos are still slow to load. As discussed, instant content wins.**

Average Load Time