

Is Video the Easiest Way to Get a Page-one Google Search Result?

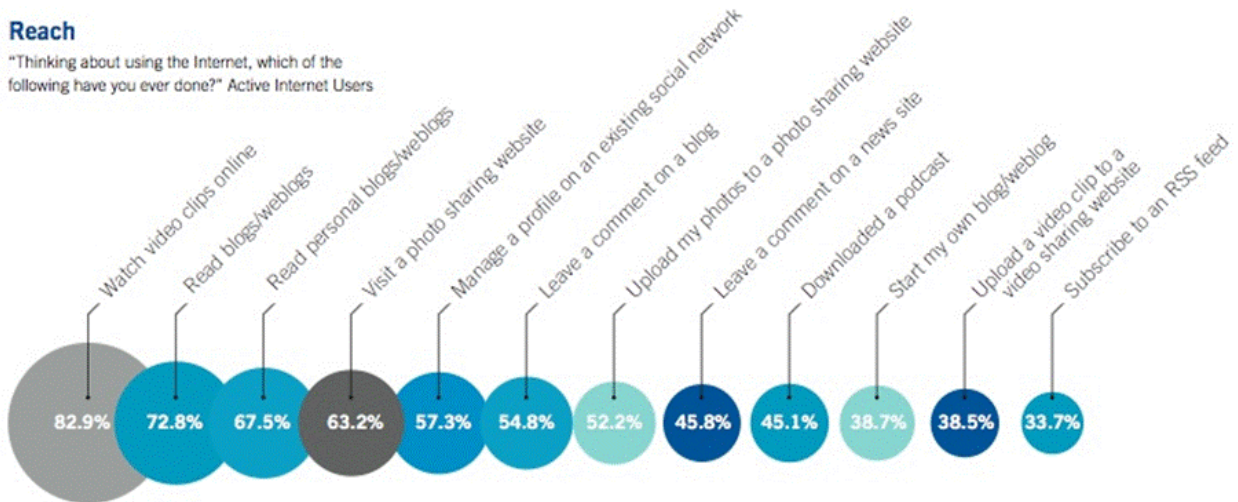
The importance of showing up at the top of a Google search results page has never been more important to business owners and improving your online visibility should be a vital component to your overall marketing strategy.

Today consumers rely on search engines as their primary method of locating and evaluating products, services and businesses and over 80% of those searches are performed on Google. If you are not already looking at effective strategies for being highly visible online then you need to think about it soon. You can be sure that your competitors are.

So what are people doing online?

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"Thinking about using the Internet, which of the following have you ever done?" Active Internet Users



The answer is that they are watching videos – primarily on YouTube.

YouTube is the most visited website on the planet and nothing else is even close. In October of 2008 over 147 million US internet users watched an average of 92 videos per viewer. Google sites (including YouTube) attracted over 100 million online video viewers – and these numbers are increasing at an almost exponential rate.

The trend on Google is for video, images, and local search results to get premium placement towards the top of the search result page meaning that other organic search results are being pushed lower on the search results page.

Is it any wonder that Google purchased YouTube? Is it just a coincidence that the trend on Google search results pages is to display “blended search results” - the practice in which Google displays videos, images, news stories, maps, and other types of results alongside their standard search results?

We have been monitoring the results of our clients’ YouTube strategies and earlier this year, Forrester Research conducted a little experiment to learn more about how search engines respond to common queries. As a result, we can say with confidence that a video/YouTube strategy can be a very effective way of improving online visibility – especially for smaller businesses.

In the Forrester study, they created a list of 40 of the most-searched keywords -- pulled from the search engines' own lists of popular and fast-growing search terms, and then ran those searches on Google in the US and the UK, as well as on MSN UK and Yahoo UK.

MSN and Yahoo (both of which they studied only in the UK) still present only standard results for most of their searches. But Google blended non-standard search results into a large majority of the keywords they studied. Nearly 75% of the searches they ran on Google in the UK, and well over 50% of the searches they ran on Google in the US, returned blended results. In both the US and the UK, Google was more likely to blend videos into its results than any other type of media. (Images were only rarely blended into any of the engines' search results.)

Not only are video results increasingly common in Google's search results, but your videos stand a much better chance than your text pages of being shown on the first results page. On the keywords for which Google offers video results, Forrester found an average of 16,000 videos vying to appear on results pages containing an average of 1.5 video results -- giving each video about an 11,000-to-1 chance of making it onto the first page of results. By comparison, there was an average of 4.7 million text pages competing for a place on results pages with an average of just 9.4 text results -- giving each text page about a 500,000-to-1 chance of appearing on the first page of results.

Now that's a lot of math, but here's what it means. For keywords for which Google offers video results, any given video in the index stands about a 50 times better chance of appearing on the first page of results than any given text page in the index. Pretty attractive odds – and if you optimize your videos you can increase those odds even further.

What all this means to you is that right now one of the easiest ways to improve your online visibility and your search results is to implement a YouTube strategy.

So what are the secrets to getting a high placement on Google using YouTube videos?

- Insert keywords into your video filenames.
- Host your videos on YouTube, and embed those YouTube videos into your own site. Google says its algorithms consider how many times a video is viewed, and any views embedded videos receive on your own site get added to the 'views' tally on YouTube. (And yes, nearly every video Forrester saw Google blend into its results came from YouTube.)
- Optimize your YouTube videos by writing keywords into your videos' titles, descriptions, and tags.
- Embed videos into relevant text pages on your site. The context provided by the text on those pages (which is hopefully already optimized for search as well) will help the search engines figure out what your videos are about.
- Create a video library on your site, so Google knows where to find your video content.
- Write keyword-rich annotations for each video in the library.

There are many other reasons to create and use video as a method of marketing your business because video engages people in a way that other content can't, but increasing your online visibility and your search results might be the most important.



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InTouch365 advises companies on how to improve their online visibility and stay connected with customers and prospects using smart, automated email marketing communications.