

Mobile social video - the 'next big thing'?



By [Desiree Gullan](#)

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Everyone's constantly on the lookout for the 'next big thing' in social media, and Twitter's CEO Dick Costolo believes the micro-blogging site has found it in the form of social video sharing - and he may be right on the money.

When Twitter bought mobile social video sharing app, Vine, in 2012, Costolo explained the move saying: "When Facebook bought Instagram, I said we're not going to do what those other guys did. We're looking for the next thing. We all agreed that this is the next thing down the road."

When Twitter officially launched the app, allowing users to create and share six-second looping mobile videos, there was some scepticism as to whether it was the type of service users would actually take to. But, just three weeks after its release it started grabbing headlines as over 113,000 videos were shared in a single weekend (at a rate of 2,324 videos every hour). Six months down the line, Vine was crowned the number one most downloaded application on iOS.

Of course Facebook and Instagram were not to be outdone. Instagram, which has over 130 million active users, now also offers built-in video sharing capabilities and its early usage stats are through the roof.

Evolution of video

Both Vine and Instagram's success stem from their simplicity and ease of use, together with their integration with the world's largest social networks. The integrated editing features and need for brevity have also led to some exceptionally creative user-generated content.

Video just makes sense for social - and for mobile. It's the logical next step after image sharing and it adds new depth to social content. As high-quality video cameras become par for the course for modern smartphones and data costs continue to drop, video sharing will become just as easy as image sharing.

The evolution of the video format to bite-sized, highly shareable six or 15 seconds of looping or non-looping footage (as used by Vine and Instagram respectively) has also made the medium significantly more mobile-friendly.

So, what does it mean for brands?

1. You can't ignore video

Of course the medium isn't one-size-fits-all, but it offers unique opportunities for engaging with one's target market in a new

way. Look into how your audience is already engaging with video and strategise a way in which your brand can leverage this.

2. It's not about the platform

When it comes to the social video format, it shouldn't be a case of brands trying to choose a particular platform and simply churning out content for the sake of it. This is missing the point - in the same way that constantly tweeting doesn't make one a master of the 140-character format. It's less about the platform itself and more about a brand's ability to tell engaging stories.

3. Master the art of short-form storytelling

For brands, great mobile videos require thought, vision and an intimate knowledge of what it is about a brand's story that will resonate. All of this has to be distilled into a single idea that can be executed extremely well - and in a matter of seconds.

4. Stop telling, start entertaining

Remember, social video platforms are becoming increasingly popular because the content on them is, above all, entertaining. These platforms force brands to change gear from shoving a product down consumers' throats to actually creating meaningful, platform-appropriate content that is both relevant and contextual.

5. Loosen up

As user-generated content continues to proliferate and consumers become ever more comfortable with new mediums, brands and marketers have to keep up. These new mediums are inherently spontaneous, so rigidly sticking to posting plans and highly manufactured content will simply not cut it.

ABOUT DESIREE GULLAN

Having worked at the 'Big Three' advertising agencies in SA and proving her creative mettle abroad, Desirée has won multiple local and international awards for her work - including Cannes Lions and Clios. She believes in the importance of craftsmanship - that it's not in the designing, but in the redesigning. Not in the writing, but in the rewriting.

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