

Personal Video Communications are Moving to Primetime

Videos enrich lives as they improve communications. They turn bland, flat text into multi-media experiences that involve the senses more completely. People share sights and sounds from their cell phones. E-mail becomes more compelling. People have virtual visits and meetings using affordable, cost-effective video conferencing, and proceedings can be archived for rebroadcast on demand. Smaller organizations can now benefit from production, management, distribution and assessment capabilities that previously were reserved for large companies. Everyone should get involved, expand their creativity and set themselves apart. Great for résumés.

Low cost of entry and ease-of-use are stimulating new applications. Creative ideas are bringing improvements all the time. They are saving costs and improving efficiencies compared to alternatives such as travel and use of print media. Rising energy and labor costs are providing incentives.

Each new generation of products removes barriers and adds realism. Smaller and more powerful computers; networks with greater bandwidth; larger, higher resolution screens with faster response times; and increased data transfer and storage capabilities, all are responsible. So is better software, including Software as a Service (SaaS), that enables anyone to add video to their communications. Better, cheaper products and services have enabled more and more individuals and smaller organizations to take advantage of innovative applications.

Application of videos. We mentioned sharing videos from cell phones. This can be fun, but it is also a way to be concerned citizens and share crime and accident videos with the authorities. Videos remove questions about memory and recall avoiding concerns about accuracy. Cameras can also be linked to the Internet for remote video surveillance, and cameras adjusted remotely to enable better viewing of questionable events. Television is also available on cell phones via MOBITV. All of these are important, but we believe that the most important applications are ones that promote improved personal communications and productivity.

What about learning curves? We consider video communications to be paradigm shifting. They bring changes that can be intimidating due to potential risks and fear of the unknown. Avoid surprises; give matters careful thought and planning. When other methods will be supplanted such as print advertising, conduct small trials to fine tune processes, gain familiarization with what is involved, and ask for honest, constructive feedback from others. Finally, maintain old methods in parallel until changes have proven themselves and are ready to be phased in.

So, what's holding you back?

- Equipment? Try these. Cell phones have cameras (You have probably seen what others have done with them on television.); standalone digital cameras also record short videos. More and more laptops and desktop computers have cameras and software. I found a \$20 USB webcam on eBay to use with my computer. Great to get started. Later, I upgraded to a \$100 model that has higher resolution and tracks my movements. Even the first one came with all the software needed to create and save videos. Then, simply attach your video file to an email and hit, "Send."
- You think you don't look good? Self confidence can be an issue. Get over it! Practice, practice, practice. Even actors complain about camera angle. Also, unless you have a lightning fast computer, videos can be a bit jerky and unnatural. So, no fast movements, and watch the hems and haws! Take it from me; taking plenty of time to practice makes a big difference. Critique each attempt and keep trying until you get it right. Motivation is important; discouragement is not an option. I am still practicing.
- Not knowing how to migrate forward? There are plenty of choices. We help to narrow the list and fit needs.

The Business Case for videos. Comparative analysis of alternatives is important to decision-making about videos. One alternative is always to do nothing. We do not think that is wise because videos are turning into killer apps that provide serious competitive advantage. We believe that the biggest challenges will be deciding when and how to implement the best video projects. Gaining experience and a comfort level with the technology will greatly improve the ability to make informed decisions. Having a well laid out strategy with regular decision points will help to get things right the first time. Starting before there is a need to play catch up will be a distinct advantage.

Learn about Outcome Improvement programs, initiatives and custom options. Now is a great time to get positioned for future growth and prosperity. Better communications is one of the ways to Outcome Improvement. We turn creative ideas into video solutions for any individual or team. Standard and custom alternatives are available that use standalone and integrated solutions from world-class vendors.

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