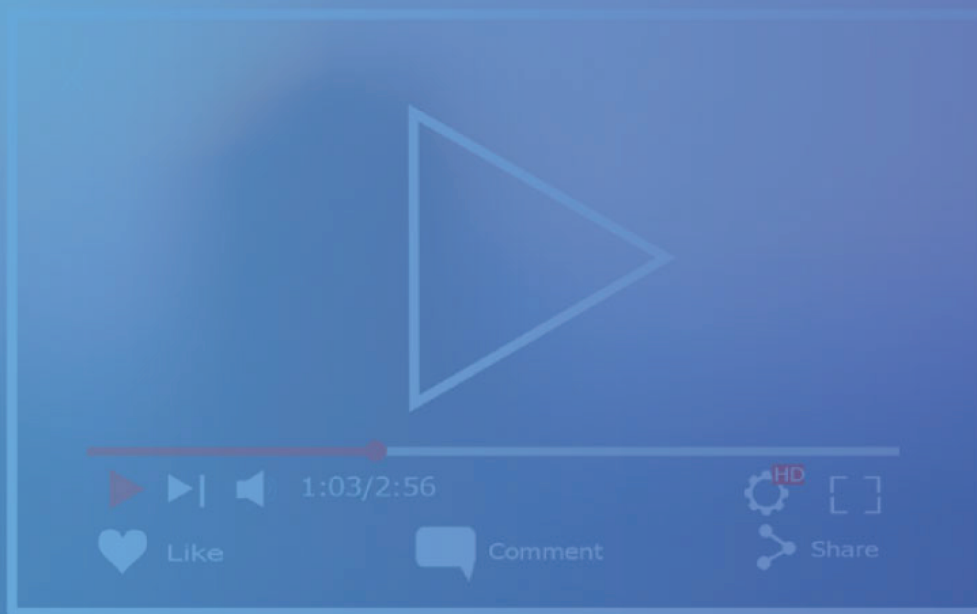


2021 State Of Video & Interactive Content



A Must Read Report for
Sales Professionals, Personalized Video &
Interactive Content To Effectively Engage Target Audiences



“People have moved to a new normal. How do you communicate as a sales guy or marketing person? How do you reach out to buyers and empathize with them? Video and interactive content can help you do both.”

— **KARTHI MARIAPPAN, HIPPOVIDEO**

Introduction

With B2B marketers having to go digital-only in 2021, content marketing has risen to the forefront of most companies' marketing strategies. As in-person events stay off the table for the rest of the year and social distancing policies remain in effect, marketers have gotten creative with their content to meet their quotas.

Buyers are always looking for insights into the industry and to make authentic connections that will keep them informed and help their companies grow, according to Alicia Esposito, Senior Content Strategist with **Content4Demand**, a B2B content marketing strategy and creative agency. Video and interactive content also allows for creative storytelling, providing marketers with an opportunity to be relatable and engage their target audiences.

“I believe that with all of us relying more on digital to engage with buyers, we're going to have to work harder to do so effectively,” Esposito said. “Buyers have always been overwhelmed by ads, campaigns and content — and that is being amplified. For marketers, that means we have to be more creative, more thoughtful and more pointed in the execution of our content experiences. Luckily, video and interactive content both lend themselves very well to creative storytelling—even some risk taking.”

Specifically, video and interactive content have become popular formats to engage buyers. Research from *Demand Gen Report* revealed:

- **47%** of Millennial buyers prefer webinars and video content;
- **65%** of B2B buyers have engaged with videos during their buying process; and
- **34%** prefer more interactive content.

According to Karthi Mariappan, CEO & Co-founder of **HippoVideo**, a video personalization and distribution platform, a great portion of marketer and buyer communication is non-verbal, leading to an impersonal relationship that may have or will fall apart. However, by interacting with buyers through digital content and videos, B2B organizations are better positioned to empathize with prospects, understand how to engage them and build stronger personal relationships.

“People have moved to a new normal,” said Mariappan. “How do you communicate as a sales guy or marketing person? How do you reach out to buyers and empathize with them? These two questions become an important aspect of your communication. And text does not carry that empathizing opportunity. But video and interactive content can help you do both.”

This report will provide specific insights and tactics modern marketers are employing in their video and interactive content marketing efforts, including:

- How providing buyers with choices increases video and interactive content engagement;
- The importance of personalizing your content for demand gen and ABM strategies;
- The impact of simplified video and interactive content; and
- Trending video and interactive content formats.



“The advantage of interactive content is that it requires audience participation. If the user is now required to be part of the content, you’ve got a more engaged audience.”

— MATT HEINZ, HEINZ MARKETING

Giving Buyers Choice Through Interactivity Increases Engagement

Interactivity is a key aspect of buyer engagement in the current digital age, and **research shows** that 30% of Millennial buyers prefer interactive content.

Mariappan explained that HippoVideo has taken highlights from informational webinars and sent them to their buyers in a compilation, allowing them to follow-up and learn more about topics they may have missed. “People now do loads of webinars, and there are good snippets and golden templates in each of those webinars,” Mariappan stated. “Many buyers want to recap what they have missed and want to do a touch base with salespersons. Sales can send out those snippets or smaller chunks as chapters inside the larger video as a more interactive option.”

Esposito agreed, stating that webinars are “the gift that keeps on giving,” and allow marketers to not only better gain deeper buyer insights, but also help them expand their content arsenal based off that data.

“[Video webinars] should be crafted with audience needs and goals; they should have a wealth of insight, data and possibly even use cases and best practices; and then interactive Q&A segments will have more pointed input driven by audience participants,” she noted. “Webinars and on-demand sessions can be powerful lead magnets on their own, but you can break down and reuse webinar content in a multitude of ways, including:


- Extract data for long-form and mini infographics;
- Pull quotes for social images;
- Reuse clips for social sharing;
- Create follow-up checklists and fact sheets based on the Q&A; and
- Develop bottom-funnel content focused on how your company can help address the trends/challenges discussed in the webinar.”

Matt Heinz, Founder and President of **Heinz Marketing**, a B2B marketing and sales acceleration firm, stated that interactive content can help marketers determine the needs of the buyer, with their participation showing not only their interests and preferences, but also driving engagement. Heinz Marketing recently held a three-hour **workshop** with ON24 to discuss recent trends in pipeline marketing, using audience input about their company’s own pipeline models for a real-time conversation.

“The advantage of interactive content is that it requires audience participation,” Heinz stated. “If the user is now required to be part of the content, you’ve got a more engaged audience. You’ve got someone that is engaging with your content longer, reading more, engaging more, learning more.”

By discussing the topic together, as both provider and practitioner, the audience was actively engaged while learning about the newest trends in the industry.

“It’s a win-win for both buyer and seller,” Heinz explained. “It’s a win for the buyer because they have content that is more valuable, more engaging, more interesting. For the sellers that are responding in time, you’re able to provide more engaging content and a more engaging experience as a follow up to that. It’s an opportunity to increase the depth and value of the relationship.”



If you take that personalized approach, focusing on buyer, industry or individual company, you can curate relevant resources and customize elements to make your buyers feel seen and understood.

— ALICIA ESPOSITO, CONTENT4DEMAND

Personalized Content Amplifies Relationships With Target Accounts

Personalization has always been an important part of the buyer's journey, and video and interactive content hubs — when designed well — can be powerful drivers for buyer engagement, according to Esposito.

“If you take that personalized approach, focusing on buyer, industry or individual company, you can curate relevant resources and customize elements to make your buyers feel seen and understood,” she said. “Now more than ever, that is crucial to winning their trust and keeping their attention.”

Thibaut Machet, CEO & Co-Founder of [PlayPlay](#), an online video maker, highlighted how content designed with the account's branding is another way to build a personal relationship with an account, as it makes the account feel like the message is designed solely for them. He said PlayPlay sends out these branded videos during their ABM campaigns, meeting the account's specific accomplishments and needs based on what they expressed publicly.

“ABM is mostly about taking a more personal approach to your target,” Machet explained. “If you create a video for a specific prospect, it's going to attract his attention. It's going to show that you have invested time for them. If you feel like this person spends time for you, because he did a quick video or a recording of themselves, you will grant them some time. And then the more you can personalize your video, the more it engaged the prospect will be.”

How Freshworks Increased Response Rates By 3X & Achieved A 40% Shorter Sales Cycle With Personalized Videos

Freshworks, a global SaaS unicorn, has more than 100K customers worldwide who use their enterprise helpdesk and CRM solutions. The company's initial account-based selling campaigns failed to get meetings booked, as their cadences to connect with the C-suite didn't leave a lasting impression.

"Our email cadence was yielding low response rates, said Aadhithya N, Head of Sales Engineering. "We wanted to capture requirements early in the buying cycle to tailor the pitches and reduce the sales cycle time. Most importantly, some of our demos had no shows, so we wanted to arrest this trend by using videos."

Freshworks needed a complete white-label solution and a seamless user experience. They partnered with Hippo Video and substituted crucial touchpoints with hyper-personalized videos. Their introductory text email was replaced by a 53-second video email that was hyper-personalized to the prospect, which helped them humanize their outreach and build relationships and prospect engagement.

Before and after the demo, the contact was substituted with a personalized LinkedIn video message to build engagement and trust. The prospects were then driven to a personalized sales page with solutions and highly relevant case studies to speed up the decision-making cycle.

"Hippo Video has shortened the sales cycle and improved deal conversions," said Aadhithya. "We can now have quality conversations with our prospects and engage better."

With in-built analytics, salespeople could track the prospects who viewed the video and follow up contextually with prospects who watched the video email. The net result was a **3X increase in their response rates, 66% increase in the number of leads from the target accounts and 40% shorter sales cycle.**

"Hippo Video was easy to use from the very start," said Aadhithya. "I can't say enough about their team. It is a great tool with incredible support and service."



Simplified Video & Interactive Content Is More Effective And Genuine

Some marketers struggle with creating video and interactive content, citing how complicated the process for creating digital content can be.


However, video and interactive content creation doesn't have to be so complex. Heinz believes that marketers who struggle with making independent video content have a perfectionist mentality, and that simply creating a casual video that's easily approachable is a more effective marketing tactic than big-budget productions.

"Some of the best videos in the market today are casual — and approachable," said Heinz. "Some of the best [LinkedIn Live](#) sessions I've seen are just people who turn on their camera and have interesting things to say. I think it's more important to have the content be useful and precise for that audience."

For example, Heinz Marketing hosts a "[CMO Coffee Talk Series](#)" with [6sense](#), a casual video conference where CMOs from all over the industry meet and discuss various B2B topics. The interactivity and engagement between the CMOs themselves allow multiple buyers and providers to engage in a very friendly atmosphere.

Machet expanded on the idea of simplified content by explaining how PlayPlay likes to keep its video content short intentionally. Although long-form video and interactive content can be effective, keeping the content precise can ensure that the buyer remains engaged and remembers the information.

"My take is that sometimes you shouldn't do long video," Machet explained. "A video of five or 10 seconds can be enough because people have a short attention span. Sometimes I see videos that are too long for what they want to tell. If the message is concise, the video should be short."



“For videos, that usually means shorter stories told at a high level. For interactive, it’s a story with multiple layers where visual elements and movement can bring the layers together into a single thread. In the interactive world, it’s less about fitting a format into a buyer stage because any format can be interactive.”

— **TONYA VINAS, CONTENT4DEMAND**

Conclusion

As video and interactive content take on a more important role in our digital-only climate, marketers continue to find new ways to innovate and reach their target audiences. However, it is important for marketing and sales teams planning to leverage video and interactive content to know how to effectively create content and not let it fall into the cracks of a vast content pool.

“Use it where it makes sense, and consider which stories are best told using mostly visual content,” said Content4Demand’s Vinas. “For videos, that usually means shorter stories told at a high level. For interactive, it’s a story with multiple layers where visual elements and movement can bring the layers together into a single thread. In the interactive world, it’s less about fitting a format into a buyer stage because any format can be interactive.”

Hippo Video

Hippo Video is a cloud-based video CX platform for sales and marketing teams. Since its launch, Hippo Video has managed to acquire over 1 Million users before launching the latest video CX platform. Hippo Video is built for the needs of Sales, Marketing, and Support teams enabling them to humanize communication thus allowing them to have REAL engagement with prospects and customers. It has more than 1,000 mid and large business customers globally including the likes of Panasonic, Freshworks, Chargebee, Tailwinds Transportation, Essilor, Clarify Med, etc.
Visit: <https://www.hippovideo.io> for more details.

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DEMAND GEN REPORT

Demand Gen Report is a targeted online publication that uncovers the strategies and solutions that help companies better align their sales and marketing organizations, and ultimately, drive growth. A key component of the publication's editorial coverage focuses on the sales and marketing automation tools that enable companies to better measure and manage their multi-channel demand generation efforts.

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