

The Tech Marketer's Guide to B2B Video

A letter from a tech marketer to tech marketers



Preethi Sundaram

Head of Technology Marketing
LinkedIn Marketing Solutions EMEA

As B2B tech marketers, we know that our most important audiences are watching online video – because everyone is watching online video. It's how senior executives and decision-makers tell us that they want to consume thought leadership content. The challenge is finding a way to make video work for our products and propositions.

The chatter around branded video doesn't always help. We're told that it has to be incredibly short to keep people's attention. It's easy to assume it needs to be funny, dramatic and have a Hollywood-style production budget as well. It can be difficult to imagine a role for video when you need to explain technical products to a very specific target audience. Is B2B tech just too complicated and boring for effective video content?

The examples in this guide prove otherwise. They show how creative-minded marketers are deploying video throughout the tech buying journey: creating compelling narratives, explaining product details, humanising brands and providing the reassurance that tech buyers need. Our role is to communicate solutions to our audiences' most frustrating problems – and video is the perfect format for bringing those solutions to life. It's not just possible to make video work for B2B tech – it's essential.

In the pages of this guide, you'll discover how taking an audience-first approach can help you fit video into the tech buying journey in a way that fits our available budgets – and delivers against our most important objectives.

It's time to start making video work for every tech marketer.

Enjoy!

Preethi

Read on and you'll learn how to approach video audience-first:

1

Analyse your customer journey

What content do your customers want from you at each stage? What do you want them to do next?

2

Set out your marketing strategy

Which medium is best suited to delivering that content at each stage?

3

Establish your metrics

How will you know if your content has succeeded?

4

Create your content

When video is the right choice, what sort of video should it be?

5

Target your content

Combine your understanding of your audience with the targeting capabilities of the delivery platform to make sure the right people see the right content at the right time.

6

Optimise your campaign

Watch the data, see what's working, tweak what's not.

Stage 1: Myth-busting

Getting the green light

The sheer numbers around video are staggering. In 2018 Cisco predicted that [82% of traffic will be video by 2022](#), driven by increases in bandwidth and processing power. More video content is created every 30 days than the major US TV channels have created in 30 years. In the UK alone, Hootsuite's Digital in 2019 report showed that 88% of internet users watch videos online, with 70% watching them on mobile.

And video is just as important for B2B marketers as it is for those in B2C. According to Forbes, three-quarters of executives watch work-related videos every week. Just over half share work-related videos with colleagues every week, and 59% prefer to watch a video on a topic rather than reading about it. But because there's so much video out

there competing for people's time and attention, B2B tech companies worry that what they want to convey is too complicated to fit into a minute or two of screen time, that video is too expensive and that their videos won't cut through.

So if you want to take advantage of the massive potential of video, how do you get past these concerns and get the moneymen to back your project?

“ ”

Don't think of video in a silo, but as part of an integrated campaign. Creating a video is just the tip of the iceberg.

Tessa Barron

Senior Director, Brand & Communications, ON24

“ ”

We always start with the audience and the company's goals, and tackle those goals one at a time. Then we look at what channels the audience is active in, and discuss video ideas as part of an overall campaign.

Jordan Hagan
Video Strategist, StoryMe

Myth #1:

“Our product is complicated and we can't do it justice in a short video”

Video should never be thought of in isolation. Instead, think about your customers' journey. You don't need to tell them everything about your company and its products or services at any point; you just need to tell them enough to get them to the next step. Identify your message and decide on the best way of getting it across. If that's a video, it only needs to convey one message, so no single video has to explain everything you do.

Myth #2:

“Video is expensive”

Video used to be big-budget, but costs are coming down all the time. A promo clip shot on your phone can deliver great results if it's right for the audience and where they are in the purchase process. That's why it's more important than ever to think about video in terms of the customer journey, because cost is no longer the problem; effectiveness is.

Too many companies spend all their money on one video, expecting it to do everything. As a result, it succeeds at nothing. It's not focused – and is probably too long, because too much is stuffed into it – so people don't watch it all. They miss the call to action, and they don't click through. So while the video may not have been expensive in real terms, it's still a waste of money.

Focusing on the customer journey solves this problem. Because the cost of video has plummeted, you can now afford to make a number of videos, each addressing one single point in the journey. That means they'll be more relevant, and because they're focused on conveying a single message, they can be shorter too. So people will be more likely to watch them all the way through to the call to action, and to take that action.

“ ”

When a business fails to understand they should be producing numerous videos they begin to place all the ROI criteria on one asset. That's a lot of pressure on that video – especially one that's too long because it's trying to do too much. When that video budget is spread across six assets, the chances of success increase significantly.

Nathan Haines
MD, Element 26



Myth #3:

“There's too much video for us to cut through”

Thinking from a customer journey perspective solves this problem too. If you understand what your audience needs at each touchpoint, you're better equipped to capture their attention. You can make informed decisions about which format to use, and the creative approach required. And when video is the right format, your understanding will help you decide what type of video will work best and how long it should be. In the early attention phase, be funny or dramatic and don't demand too much of their time at first. Later on in the consideration phase, or close to purchase, potential customers are more likely to respond to more detailed product information, to ideas about value, and to an authentic human face.



Stage 2: Awareness

The set-up

Video is particularly powerful in the awareness phase, when you want to tell a story or evoke an emotional response. But for video to do its job properly, the story must be right too. The best brand videos – the ones made by Gillette, Airbnb or Nike, for example – don't talk about products or services. They talk about how those products and services make you feel.

Adobe is a great example of a B2B tech brand with a number of complex propositions. But its top-of-the-funnel videos are celebrated for being funny and clever illustrations of the problems its products solve for clients. Then, further down the funnel, it uses targeted videos to talk to engaged prospects about what its products actually do.

In the awareness phase your videos should present viewers with a scenario that evokes a strong reaction. Create a connection with the audience with a shared frustration or problem, and address it in a light-hearted, entertaining way. These videos should be short enough to get your point across, without demanding too much of the audience's attention. They can be edits from your main video, or bespoke trailers. The main goal in the awareness phase is to drive viewers to your site to watch your main video or to find out more about your solution.



“ ”

Top-of-the-funnel awareness videos should be short and to the point. Most will be discovered off-site, so you want to quickly evoke emotion, educate or entertain, doing everything you can to draw them in and influence their next action. You might even need to inform them of pain points they don't know they have.

Amber Long
VP, Content, PR & Social, gyro

There are a couple of powerful tools that can help in this critical phase. The first is your brand. In the moment when people decide whether to watch a video or skip it, brand recognition matters. That's why Nathan Haines, MD of video production company Element 26, argues that building a strong brand has never been more important for success. And if you already have a brand people are likely to recognise, make sure they see the video is from you right from the start. This can be addressed by how you frame the video in a feed when you're using Sponsored Content on LinkedIn.

The second weapon is targeting. This is where the platform really comes into play. Use your understanding of your customers to inform the platform's ability to target. Then your video will reach people it's aimed at, increasing the likelihood they'll watch it and click through to the next step. Then your other messages – in whatever channel or medium – can fill in the details.

“ ”

Businesses using social to reach their audience need to realise they are in the moments business. You only have a moment to capture the audience's attention before they scroll past you and onto the next thing. So you need to produce content that is succinct and highly emotive, and the most powerful emotional trigger is your brand.

Nathan Haines
MD, Element 26



Distribution deals

LinkedIn allows you to target by location, and then by attributes based on company (sector, size, connections etc.), demographics (age and gender), education, experience and interests. Because it's very important to LinkedIn users that their profiles are up to date, our targeting data is the richest and most reliable there is when it comes to professional audiences. Overlay that with the depth of behavioural data that comes from users' frequent interaction with their feed, and you can be sure your video is hitting exactly the audience you want to reach.

“ ”

Working with clients, we ask ourselves, ‘What value does this business or product bring to the world, and how can we deliver that as a feeling people can take away?’ It goes back to that old saying, ‘People won’t remember what you say, and they won’t necessarily remember what you do, but they’ll never forget how you made them feel.’

Jonathon Palmer
Global Head of Strategy, Omobono

The measurability of video is huge here. With text-based content marketing like reports or white papers, you know if someone’s downloaded them, or spent time on the page, but you can’t know if people have actually read them. But you know when someone’s watched your video, and when they stopped. That means you can tailor the length of your videos to match your audience, and in B2B that increasingly means making them longer. According to Todd Patton, Head of Comms & Story at video marketing platform TwentyThree, company research showed that around half of the videos on the platform are under two minutes, but they only account for 10% of the total engagement. He believes there’s a lot more opportunity for B2B marketers to engage with their potential customers through longer videos.

What you measure will change at each stage of the customer journey. In the awareness phase, you need to know how many times your video was viewed, how much of the video was watched, and how many viewers responded to your call to action.

“ ”


A great example of a top-of-funnel video is HPE’s recent cybersecurity campaign. It’s a seven-minute piece of story-telling and entertainment that conveys a feeling of exposure and vulnerability, and also lands some key product messages.

Jonathon Palmer
Global Head of Strategy, Omobono

HPE
Enterprise Information Tech

A short video series about cybersecurity for business, told through the lens of authorities trying to stop The Wolf.

 **Funnel stage**
Top of Funnel, Awareness

 **Our review**
Christian Slater gets his teeth into the role of The Wolf, black-hat hacker extraordinaire. Cybersecurity isn’t the sexiest topic but HP’s video series engages the audience and identifies big threats in a dramatic and unforgettable way. It’s detailed enough to be be unsettling, but still broad-brush enough to be widely relevant. This is a classic example of concentrating about how you want viewers to feel – in this case, nervous.

Adobe Experience Cloud
Integrated Marketing & Web Analytics


After saving the world again, Secret Agent Hunter has a bad check-in experience when his hotel booking is lost.


 **Funnel stage**
Top of Funnel, Awareness

 **Our review**
Big-budget thrills with a comic twist are Adobe’s take on the problems of delivering great customer experience when your systems don’t talk to each other. We all know what it feels like to experience the indignities heaped on poor Agent Hunter, but the look on his face when he pulls out the voucher he printed off is priceless. Sean Connery would never have stood for it.

Adobe Experience Cloud
Integrated Marketing & Web Analytics


Analytics show a spike in ad clicks, and a huge increase in production ensues to meet demand. But all is not as it seems.

 **Funnel stage**
Top of Funnel, Awareness

 **Our review**
Adobe takes another familiar scenario – in this case an unexpected jump in ad clicks – and turns it into a quick-cutting, perfectly cast cautionary tale. The whole thing is given a frantic sense of energy by great use of music (Dukas’ Sorcerer’s Apprentice, Fantasia fans), and amid all the fun and excitement there’s also a loving attention to detail.

Zendesk
Customer Service Software

A light-hearted riff on the all-too-common lovers’ argument over what to watch online.

 **Funnel stage**
Top of Funnel, Awareness

 **Our review**
High concept, low budget. Zendesk is all about streamlining and improving the relationships between business and customers. Fifteen seconds, two costumes and a nice piece of sound design are all it takes for them to show they understand relationships are complicated. We hope whoever came up with the spacesuit/diving suit gag saw a little something extra in their pay packet at the end of that month.

Stage 3: Consideration

The change of plans

Bring in your product in the consideration phase, but give your company a human face too.

The B2B tech purchasing process typically involves a group of people with different information needs, so some consideration videos will need to introduce your product's features (for the technical people), while others should give a sense of what it's like to work with your company (for management types). Formats that work here include explainers, case studies, webinars, how-to videos and virtual tours. The challenge is to be authentic. If you use testimonials, for example, they need to overcome viewers' inbuilt cynicism about why someone is praising your product.

Because audiences for consideration videos will be more tightly defined than those driving awareness, the videos themselves can be more targeted, and they can also be longer, because your audience has already engaged with you, and now wants more detail.

In this phase, measure how engaged your viewers are by looking at your engagement rate. This is the number of interactions your videos get (comments, likes, clicks, shares etc.) compared to the number of views. And look at your estimated cost per view (eCPV) to keep track of how hard your video budget is working.

“ ”

Video is a huge element in building trust. Seeing a real person – a real customer – in a case study really builds trust in your brand.

Christoffer Larsen
VP of Marketing, TwentyThree

Hootsuite
Social Media Management Platform

Client case study of how Hong Kong Airlines used Hootsuite during a difficult time for the business.

Funnel stage
Mid-funnel, Client Case Study

Our review
A classic of the genre, this has it all. A real-life customer talking about the product gives it authenticity. The resolution of a difficult business situation with the help of that product gives it drama. The explanation of how the product has improved business processes makes it compelling. And the big picture around social media gives it relevance. This is how it's done.

Wistia
Video Software Platform

Wistia challenged a video production agency to make three videos for three different budgets and created a Wistia Original Series out of the story, including social media trailers.

Funnel stage
Mid-funnel, product features, humanising the brand

Our review
If anyone tells you B2B videos have to be under two minutes, just show them this (and maybe give them a sandwich). Less a movie and more a mini-series, One, Ten, One Hundred demonstrates that if the idea is strong enough, you can make something epic. And if the whole thing feels a bit meta at times – you're watching a Wistia video showing a company making three videos to promote a Wistia video management product – it does a great job of introducing the Wistia team.

Drift
Conversational Marketing Platform

Drift announces its newest product integration with LinkedIn Sales Navigator, bringing the power of modern selling to conversations.

Funnel stage
Mid-funnel, Product Feature & Integration

Our review
Casting and script hold the key to this low-budget gem. Getting your message across right at the start is crucial, but Drift concentrates on what users want, rather than what the company's selling. And by using a real employee to do so, they give a sense of what they're like to work with as a company.

Slack
Collaboration Tool

This video uses a fictional friend to walk you through the different use cases for Slack, and how they help her at work.

Funnel stage
Mid-funnel, Product Explainer

Our review
A relaxed, stylish explainer video, as slick as you'd expect from Slack. It takes you through the features of the product and shows their benefits. Just quirky enough to be memorable, but not so much that it's distracting.

HPE
Enterprise Information Tech

Meet the IT Monster, a character which represents out-of-control IT systems disrupting the workplace.

Funnel stage
Mid-funnel, Consideration

Our review
A serious subject gets a light, playful, audience-friendly treatment in this monster movie from HPE. The monster-as-metaphor puts the point across, but what's really smart is the way the monster behaves – we've all worked with that guy. You've got to love the closing leaf-blower gag too.

Stage 4: Decision

The final push

In the decision phase, all communications are targeted to the potential customer. As a result, video hasn't traditionally been used. But it's increasingly being employed in a number of roles.

Videos can reassure prospective customers they're making the right decision through testimonials from existing customers. Welcome videos can introduce the company, give it a human face and demonstrate customer service. FAQ sessions and webinars can establish the expertise of the sales people who'll conclude the deal. And full-length product demonstrations can begin the onboarding process for potential end users.

Once again, authenticity and trust-building are key here, because no matter how good your product or service is, people buy from people. So the stars of your decision phase videos will be your employees.

At the bottom of the funnel, if you're using lead generation forms with your videos, you should be keeping track of which ones generate the most leads, and the quality of those leads. If not, then measure click-through rates, and use that to understand your estimated cost per click (eCPC).



“ ”

People always think about video as top-of-the-funnel awareness ads, in the traditional TV sense, but that's not where the power of video is today. The customer journey has totally flipped and marketing is going all the way down to the decision phase. Customers are getting so much information on the web, so marketing is having to do a lot more to help sales and that's why deeper funnel content is so important.

Jordan Hagan
Video Strategist, StoryMe

LinkedIn
Professional Networking Platform

LinkedIn introduces our new campaign manager experience, Objective-Based Advertising.

Funnel stage
Bottom of the Funnel, Product Update

Our review
This bright and breezy animation is heavy on graphics and light on words. In fact, it uses a grand total of 17 in its 45 second runtime, and three of those are 'Objective-Based Advertising'. All of this makes it simple to follow, with the added bonus of being easy to localise for multiple markets. Et voila, we produced versions in French, German, Spanish and Mandarin.

Workday
People Management Software

The Business Caddie is there to support you with every work decision throughout the day.

Funnel stage
Bottom of the Funnel, Features

Our review
Workday turns up the wattage in this smartly-scripted buddy comedy starring golf legend Phil Mickelson and actor Andy Buckley from the US version of The Office. The Business Caddie concept gets across what Workday does, while the leads' easy-going charm gives the business a human face, and then puts a big smile on it. It also ties in with Workday's sponsorship of the Ryder Cup. And, as a bonus, Mickelson's international fame helped this clip work in French, German, Spanish and Japanese versions.

ON24
Webinar Hosting Platform

ON24's low-cost client success stories highlight the amazing webinar programmes their clients have created.

Funnel stage
Bottom of the Funnel, Success Stories

Our review
Proof that you don't need a big budget if you've got a happy client. All you have to do is stay out of the way and let them tell their story. They talk about the great things your products let them do, they look good and they make you look good. Everybody wins.

Salesforce
CRM

Salesforce elevates their customer and lets them explain how the product has helped them to deliver across B2B and B2C.

Funnel stage
Bottom of the Funnel, Success Stories

Our review
On the other hand, if you do have a big budget... T-Mobile gets the rock-star treatment in this video: all brand colours, logos and pounding soundtrack. Salesforce keeps its distance and lets people from across the client company tell their stories, which are really strong. The whole thing feels authentic, not just in terms of the people, but also the T-Mobile brand. Once again, it's a win-win.

Microsoft
Technology Company

This video introduces a new feature to Microsoft Teams, blurring out your background to avoid distractions.

Funnel stage
Bottom of the Funnel, New Features

Our review
Sometimes the simplest ideas are the best. Take some well-known video fails, show how they'd have been saved by your new background blurring feature, then sit back and watch the plaudits roll in.

● REC

Video for sales

Then, once a lead has been passed from marketing to sales, the falling cost of video means sales people are increasingly using one-to-one video in emails or through direct messaging to address customer questions and build relationships.

The balance you need to strike here is between keeping this sort of video on-brand while allowing sales people the individuality that clients respond to. Training and guidelines are essential. Some companies have installed video booths where salespeople can create their own videos that still maintain the brand identity, while others provide branded intros and outros. But once again, think about who your audience is and what they want.

“ ”

There are certain times when branding makes sense, but it can make your videos start to feel like ads. People don't want to be marketed to, and they'll tune out. Our product launches should feel like Drift, but a video of someone talking – it's okay to do that from anywhere.

Dave Gerhardt
VP of Marketing, Drift

00:00:16:00



Stage 5: Planning

Fail to plan, plan to fail

A crucial benefit that comes from starting with your audience and your goals is efficiency in production. By understanding the customer journey, you can plan where you're going to use video and what sort of videos you'll need. From there you can work out if content can be reused, and where costs can be saved. This sort of planning means the difference between a shoot that produces one very expensive video, and one that produces several different, more cost-effective videos.

Planning should also take account of whether your videos will need to be localised for specific markets. This will inform the decisions you make about the types of video you want to use. Animation, for example, is popular for multi-language campaigns, since it's easier – and cheaper – to change voice-overs, subtitles and on-screen text than it is to reshoot videos in

multiple languages. Or you might follow Workday's example and cast your video on the basis of international appeal.

Another thing to analyse at this stage is where your videos will be seen. Remember that 57% of people engage with LinkedIn via mobile, so optimise for that. When someone clicks through from your video, make sure it's easy to view, navigate and submit information from your landing page. At the same time, make sure the web page hosting your videos is optimised to do so.

You should also plan for a silent experience. Some 80% of videos on LinkedIn are watched with the sound off, so unless your video is a homage to the pre-talkie days, you're going to need subtitles or captions. Proper captioning is also important because it makes your videos accessible to people with hearing disabilities.



“ ”

Having a clear plan is a must. What are your objectives? Who do you want to reach? What is your budget? How will you measure success? My best piece of advice would be not to proceed unless you can answer all those questions and more – you definitely need a solid plan in place.

Rob Coyne
GM EMEA, Hootsuite

“ ”

You always need to start with quality – that’s what leads to revenue – but traditional key performance indicators in video are about quantity. It’s not ‘Did someone click?’, it’s ‘What behaviour resulted from that click?’

Tessa Barron
Senior Director, Brand & Communications, ON24

Stage 6: Feedback

Test screenings

Just as every Hollywood studio test-screens its movies – and changes them if necessary before release – you should be using audience feedback to make sure your audience is doing what you want them to do.

The best way to do this is by A/B testing different versions of your videos. Viewers not getting to the end of the clip? Think about making it shorter, or making the story clearer. If they’re not getting beyond the first few seconds, make sure you’re leading with a problem they can relate too. Or maybe your targeting needs a rethink? Change one thing at a time, measure what happens, compare, repeat.

The background of the slide features a close-up, vertical stack of several VHS tapes. The tapes are black with silver and yellow reels visible. Overlaid on the tapes are white L-shaped corner brackets in the top-left, top-right, and bottom-right corners, and a red dot with the text 'REC' in the top-left corner, mimicking a video player interface. A white timecode '00:00:19:00' is visible in the bottom-left corner.

Glossary:

LinkedIn metrics

LinkedIn offers the following metrics for video:

- **Views:** At least one second of playback while the video is at least 50% on screen on desktop, or 300 milliseconds on mobile.
- **Views at 25%:** The number of times your video was watched at 25% of its length, including watches that skipped to this point.
- **Views at 50%:** The number of times your video was watched at 50% of its length, including watches that skipped to this point.
- **Views at 75%:** The number of times your video was watched at 75% of its length, including watches that skipped to this point.
- **Completions:** The number of times your video was watched at 97-100% of its length, including watches that skipped to this point.
- **Completion Rate:** Completions divided by views as a percentage.
- **View Rate:** Number of views divided by impressions, multiplied by 100.
- **eCPV:** Estimated cost per view.
- **Full Screen Plays:** Total number of clicks to view video in full screen.

Stage 7:

The feel-good ending

- 1) **It's not about starting with video** – start with your customers and your goals. When you know what your prospective customers want at each touchpoint, you can decide whether video is the best tool for the job, and which type of video will work best.
- 2) **It's not one video** – it's one video for each point you want to make or message you want to convey.
- 3) **It's not a video strategy** – it's a marketing strategy, and video is one of the tactics within that.
- 4) **It's not about quantity** – it doesn't matter how many people saw your video. What matters is whether they were the right people, and what they did next.

“ ”

The possibilities with video are endless, especially as social networks constantly evolve their video capabilities. LinkedIn recently changed the way it displays video on the platform.

Sponsored Content – including video – now lives directly in the news feed as a standalone post. This builds on brand awareness, drives qualified traffic to your website and allows you to connect with high-value leads. Without accurate targeting, it's difficult for ads to be seen by the right people. However, with LinkedIn's B2B targeting capabilities available for Sponsored Content, our audiences can be found by traits such as job title, seniority, company name, industry, skills and more. It's key to be aware of these kinds of changes and enhancements so you can be the first to capitalise on them.

Rob Coyne
GM EMEA, Hootsuite



Closing credits

LinkedIn would like to thank the following people for their contributions to this report:

- Tessa Barron, Senior Director, Brand & Communications, ON24
- Rob Coyne, GM EMEA, Hootsuite
- Jordan Hagan, Video Strategist, StoryMe
- Nathan Haines, MD, Element 26
- Dave Gerhardt, VP of Marketing, Drift
- Christoffer Larsen, VP of Marketing, and Todd Patton, Head of Comms & Story, TwentyThree
- Amber Long, VP, Content, PR & Social, gyro
- Jonathon Palmer, Global Head of Strategy, Omobono



Get Started with
Video Ads on
LinkedIn today.

lnkd.in/b2bvideo



About LinkedIn

LinkedIn operates the world's largest professional network on the internet with more than 600 million members in over 200 countries and territories. This represents the largest group anywhere of influential, affluent and educated people.

Relationships Matter

With LinkedIn Marketing Solutions, brands build relationships with the world's professionals by using accurate targeting to deliver relevant content and communications. As today's connected professionals seek out ideas and insights from the people and brands they trust, marketers use LinkedIn to target advertising and publish relevant content in a professional context. Brands extend reach through the social sharing that occurs naturally on LinkedIn.

Follow us on
Twitter:

[@LinkedInMktg](https://twitter.com/LinkedInMktg)

For more
information visit:

marketing.linkedin.com