

Using video for internal corporate communications, training & compliance



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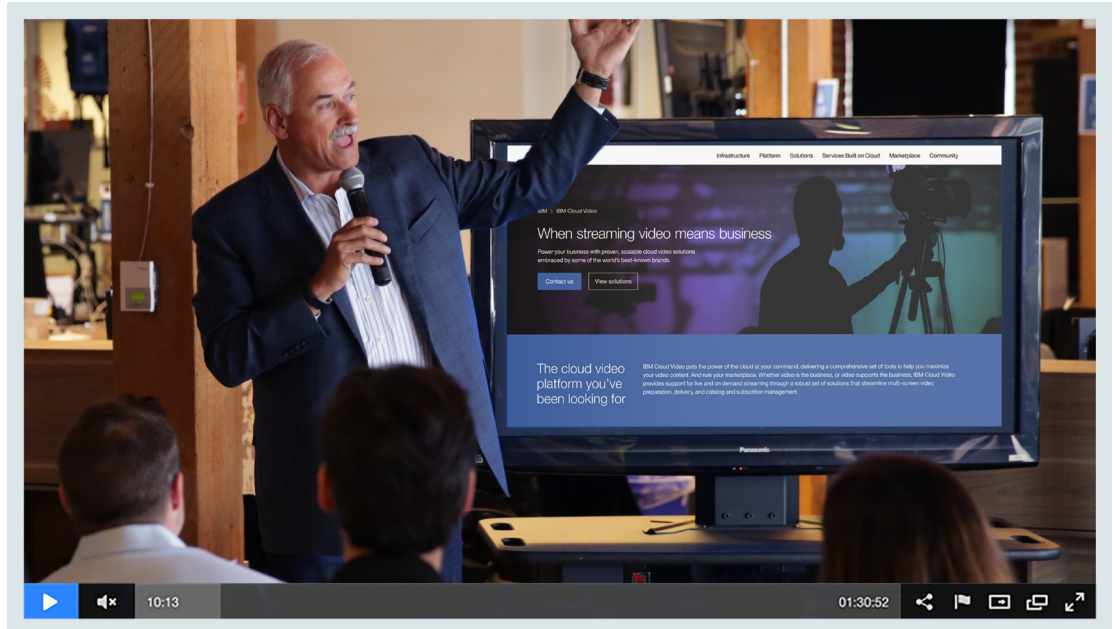
Video and Corporate Communications

Video is a very engaging medium. This is true for reaching employees just as it is with engaging consumers interested in your product. Those who are already using it in the workplace agree on its positive impact. In fact, 94% of executives who watch online business videos daily feel it's an effective business communication tool¹ and 88% of executives believe video is crucial for fostering corporate culture². This is true for on-demand video assets and especially true for live video. Live content gives your audience a way to engage: the ability to like, comment and even ask direct questions. As a result, viewers are not just watching but participating. And, 93% of executives agree that creating high-quality video is easier than it was 2 years ago³.

Video can also help organizations better navigate changing work dynamics. For example, more employees are working remotely now than ever before. This includes personnel who might work out of state or country, and also just local employees electing to work remotely. In the US as of 2017, 43% of employees spent at least some time working remotely, a 4% increase since 2012⁴. In a study of 713 communicators by Ragan Communications, video helped bridge the gap with those who worked remote, as 76% agreed it improved communications with these remote employees⁵.

Use cases for internal video

Once an organization has decided that video is right for their internal goals, the next step is outlining use cases, which will naturally lead into requirements. These use cases are sometimes driven by desired outcomes: cost savings, increased productivity, reduced turnover or improved corporate culture.



EXECUTIVE TOWN HALLS

As companies get larger, there can be a natural feeling of disconnect with senior executives. This can be especially true if an employee's interaction with them is only an occasional mass email, which may or may not have been written by them. And while this is certainly true for any company across any industry with dispersed employees, the challenge is further exaggerated among the growing number of companies doing social selling where most employees or consultants never step foot into an office.

One way to address this is through broadcasting executive town halls. In a Ragan Communications study, 44% praised video for allowing employees to be more engaged with senior executives⁶. Ideally, this should help in more ways than just to give a face to leadership, though, it should convey not just their passion, but also their vision for the company's direction, and enable feedback from employees. The latter can be especially crucial to help combat doubt that might naturally build among staff if large scale decisions aren't openly justified.

Beyond sharing vision, a town hall lets executives field questions from the audience. This benefit can go both ways, allowing upper management to gain valuable insight from employees, while staff can feel more confident in organizational decisions.

INTERNAL TRAINING

77% of companies that use online video say they record and store content for on-demand use, with leading investment justifications being the ability to re-use training content (36%) and to reach more employees (32%)⁷. Video shines for training in both cost reductions and being able to reach not just remote employees, but future hires as well.

Companies can also turn to their own star staff members to give invaluable insight specific to their organization, the type of which could not be gleaned from an outside or outsourced training program. This can be through relating direct past experience with clients, addressing competitors as they relate to the company, sharing company specific processes and best practices for tools, etc.

Training sessions can also be interactive by live broadcasting them with Q&A. This can make sure that staff are best informed about job specific concerns, and also keeps training timely through the infusion of current events and trends that could impact an employee's experience.

HR COMPLIANCE

HR (human resource) departments will have their own goals for employees, along with managing continual staff development. This can range from safety training to best practices for maintaining company integrity to continuing education.

Video strengthens the HR on-boarding process and frees up resources. With video, each new employee receives consistent messaging that is flexible to allow for flexibility in scheduling. It also helps with geographic scale, allowing a HR department to reach staff who might be in a totally different office while avoiding the complexities of having to send staff on site.

HR departments need a way to validate use of resources as well. It's insufficient to simply distribute training material, but there needs to be way to validate completion. Video can assist in this, tracking use of resources down to an individual level. In fact, 43% of executives cite being able to see how long someone watched a video event as being very important, while 42% want to link viewership to a specific profile⁸. This can give completion reports, arming HR professionals with the information they need to follow up with employees if mandatory content is not watched through to the end.

DEPARTMENT MEETINGS

On a weekly basis, if not daily, companies are conducting meetings that could be considered valuable internal content. These meetings could be discussing new features, new directions or even going over performance results. This information could be valuable to employees who weren't directly involved in the meeting.

Through streaming, more employees can be exposed to these meetings. This can help facilitate the spread of information, reaching more staff. Through regularly archiving meetings, they can be discovered and referenced later, or even used to reach those in different time zones who were just unable to participate in the original meeting.

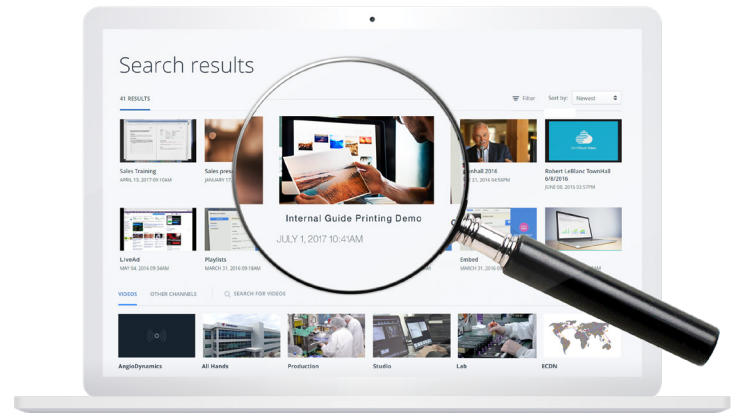
In addition, employees can selectively choose, or "cherry pick", what meetings are relevant for them. For example, someone in the marketing department might find value in an engineering meeting talking about a new feature. However, regular occurring engineering meetings might not be valuable to them. This can be an effective way to boost the use of these assets and overall attendance. In fact, Ragan Communications' study of 713 communicators found that internal video improved attendance/participation by 42%⁹; so not just increasing the value of this content, but broadening the audience size as well.

Optimizing internal video activities

After an organization has selected their video use cases, the next step is optimizing their approach to internal video. This includes examining ways to bolster the effectiveness of their corporate communications strategy, while at the same time improving results.

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LEVERAGING ON-DEMAND VIDEO

One pitfall to avoid is having a corporate communications strategy be strictly live based. On-demand video adds a tremendous amount of value to your internal video activities. It makes your video more global, able to be watched regardless of time zones, and acts as a long term resource that can be referenced long after creation.

On-demand archives can present challenges over time, though, as the amount of content grows. In fact, 79% of executives agree that one frustration of using on-demand video is not being able to quickly find the piece of information they need¹⁰. Consequently, those managing these archives need to focus on making assets discoverable. Part of this is the inclusion of a way to search archives to find relevant assets. However, the effectiveness of this relies on what information employees can search on. As a result, these strategies can help you better leverage your on-demand content:

- Metatagging
- Transcription
- Machine Learning

At some level, some amount of manual labor in cataloging content should be utilized as part of the metatagging process. For example, providing a title and description for the asset. It can also include adding tags to the video, such as the department involved or the subject matter. Transcription can also be another beneficial method for improving searchability. One of the nice aspects of searchable transcripts is adding context in ways someone adding a title and description might have overlooked. For example, during an engineering meeting, an executive might call out the launch and success of a particular feature. This might not be spelled out in the description, but the transcription process could pick it up and include it in search results.

That said, manually creating transcripts is a time consuming process. While the speed of transcription varies, it's projected that transcribing an hour of video can take anywhere from three to eight hours to complete¹¹. This is where machine learning can come into play. Through speech-to-text capabilities, transcripts can be automatically generated. This reduces what was once a hugely time consuming effort to something that can be a quick, standard practice for assets. Machine learning can go beyond speech-to-text as well, through enriching assets based on recognized images and other visual keys as well as tone detection. As powerful as machine learning is, though, it's not flawless. Consequently, someone should review things like auto tags for accuracy. However, the longer machine learning is used, the more it learns which has the added benefit of improving the accuracy.

CLOSED CAPTIONS

Closed captions can be a great method to enhance existing video assets. While there are regulatory reasons to caption content, ranging from the Americans with Disabilities Act to rules from the FCC, there are other major incentives, including catering to changing viewing preferences. In fact, Facebook discovered that a video with captions will generally have 12% higher viewership versus uncaptioned content, hinting toward a preference for captions¹². Personal experience will likely validate this research, as there have probably been times where one has elected to watch content with captions. This can range from being in a noisy setting, like a train, or even as an aid to improve understanding of what was said.

Given these statistics, it's not surprising that the more an enterprise uses video, the more they recognize the importance of captions. In fact, companies that use video nine or less times a year are only 7% as likely to list closed captions as a top five video solution influencer. Companies that use video 100 or more times a year, though, are three times as likely to list closed captions as a top five video solution influencer, at 21%¹³.

Unfortunately, closed captioning content can be challenging. It can be time consuming, costly or both. This has led to organizations having to make tough decisions regarding what content to add captions to. Consequently, the solution is to present a more scalable solution to caption generation. This can be achieved through using AI (artificial intelligence) for automated speech-to-text conversion. Solutions for this, such as IBM Watson, can be setup to automatically generate captions for uploaded assets, creating a scalable solution. That said, standard practice should be that content is checked for accuracy once captions are generated and edited. Ideally, a simple editor is used within the video platform so captions can be easily reviewed and corrected.

REACHING MOBILE DEVICES

November 2016 marked the first time that mobile Internet usage exceeded desktop usage¹⁴. As more and more people use mobile devices, the importance of compatibility for work related content increases. Not surprisingly, executives already realize the importance of being mobile compatible in their video strategy. In fact, 73% of companies that produce more than 100 live online video events a year describe the ability to transcode video for distribution to multiple devices as either essential or very important¹⁵.



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As a result, at the bare minimum a company's content should be able to reach mobile devices. This means, for example, not using Flash or other technology that is incompatible with major mobile operating systems like iOS and Android. Content should also be accessible, though, in catering to different connection speeds. A way to address this is through adaptive bitrate streaming, which will create lower bitrate and resolution combinations of video content for those with slower connections. This can be considerate of users on a mobile device who might not have access to a very fast connection otherwise.

Security and protecting the network

The importance of security, especially with internal facing video, can't be understated. In fact, an overwhelming majority, at 83%, of executives see securing video content as important¹⁶. Another consideration is implementing a strategy that won't harm the corporate network, effectively being able to deliver video without negatively impacting a local network across any number of office locations.

SECURE CONTENT WITH ACCESSIBILITY

Any internal video strategy has to walk a tightrope between ensuring security while making video content accessible. Video that is so secure that it's difficult to access creates scenarios where users ignore that valuable internal video exists for them, wasting the investment. Alternatively, content that is too easy to access jeopardizes how secure that content actually is.

Consequently, organizations have decided to champion security solutions that have already proven themselves. In fact, in many cases they are already deployed. This can be existing LDAP (Lightweight Directory Access Protocol) technology, tapping into secure logins that are already widely used at an organization. This presents a great method to secure assets while making them accessible as it will use the same credentials used to access other internal services. As a result, 46% of executives say that the ability to integrate streaming platforms with LDAP/corporate directories is a priority influence on the streaming technology purchase decision¹⁷.

REDUCING NETWORK STRAIN

Among information technology executives, 34% cite maintaining network security as a top two administrative feature influencing future streaming investment decisions. The second, at 25%, was distributing video without harming the corporate network¹⁸.

Now the level of challenge in supporting internal video streaming depends on the location of the audience. If an organization has an employee base that largely works remote, the strain on the local network is pretty much confined to just the upload speed used for broadcasting the signal out. In that scenario, a dedicated line is ideal.

Issues can arise, though, if there is a large concentration of viewership around a single location. An example would be a large, central office where most employees work and would be watching video at the same time. This can cause issues during all-hands events, such as an executive town hall, where the entire company is going to be watching. A scenario where you have 100 viewers or even 200 viewers or more all in the same office trying to watch content can cause a lot of strain on the local network.

There are solutions to these scenarios, though. One of the better approaches is to adapt a hybrid cloud solution. This can still allow remote, authenticated viewers to access content, but scale internally to reduce network strain. This is achieved through ECDN (Enterprise Content Delivery Network) installations, which can be installed on shared or dedicated hardware as a virtual server and in conjunction with firewalls. Once in place at a location, video content delivery is cached for scalability. So without ECDN, 200 live stream viewers might require 300 mbps of download bandwidth from the network at 1.5 mbps each. With ECDN, though, 200 viewers might require only 3 mbps total, to account for multiple bitrates. As a result, all hands events with everyone from the same office watching are achievable without hampering other Internet activities over the network.

Internal Marketing

It's important to continue marketing the success of your video communications internally to ensure employees are aware that video capabilities exist, know how to access them, and understand the value. In a recent 2017 Forrester Research study, a disconnect was discovered between what executives said they had delivered to employees for video and what employees said they experienced. For example, 71% of executives said they had deployed video for live corporate training, while only 44% of employees reported having access to video for live corporate training¹⁹.

Most companies have some form of internal email newsletter to keep employees up to speed on various events and announcements. These newsletters are a great way to get the word out and highlight recent successes. Other ideas include contests for employees to participate actively in creating and sharing video on certain topics where winners receive prizes or acknowledgement.

Keep in mind too that there will be a continual stream of new hires coming on board that will need to understand how to request access or discover video content. Be sure to work closely with on-boarding teams so that instructions are clearly communicated to employees joining the company. Video can have an incredibly positive impact on a new employee's first impression of your corporate culture.

Gauging success

What makes for a successful corporate communications deployment? Armed with use cases, optimizations and important security considerations, the final stretch is to determine how to gauge success for your service and what that means, ranging from high use of internal assets to validating a quality experience.

ANALYTICS AND TRACKING

A standard way of gauging success is a simple numbers game. Basically, how many people watched the latest town hall or completed a video training series. These statistics are meaningful, and provide a high level view of content use.

Companies, however, can go deeper. Through tying viewership to a user or registrant enterprises can learn more about their video use, and the value of this is being recognized. In fact, 90% of executives see the collection of viewer registration information as important²⁰. Due to the fact that content is being secured, such as through a corporate directory, enterprises can already link viewing history to a specific user.

A benefit of doing this is for compliance, as referenced in the HR use case. If a course was mandatory, enterprises can validate that all employees watched the content and anyone who didn't complete it can be followed up with. However, it can also determine how useful content is under more rigid criteria. For example, if a group of employees were all hired recently, their consumption of video can be monitored to see what assets might come up more frequently in the onboarding process. Not only that, but it can tell you how much of each asset was watched. If the same video, for example, was watched by all but they stopped after less than a minute it might be time to examine the value of that particular asset

MEASURING QUALITY

Understanding viewership and viewing patterns is important. However, a lot of time and investment is also spent on creating a quality experience for employees. This is not a trivial aspect either, as 93% of executives see it as an important gauge of success to be able to measure the quality of the video signal being delivered to the end user²¹.



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Historically, this has been achieved through surveys, asking employees to rate their experience. This is slow and, in terms of the time commitments from staff, also costly for what it achieves. Consequently, a strategy to address this can be through monitoring consoles. These can be used to not only troubleshoot in real time but also give an idea of overall performance. In particular it can be great for weeding out if a complaint is a systemic problem, or something tied to a specific user. For example, if a call comes in of an employee with constant buffering, a monitoring console would be able to tell you how many other users are experiencing the same thing. If a high percentage is seen, like 70-80%, it's a systemic issue and you can check the overall stream health to see if it's a problem with the upload speed at the location being broadcast from. If a low percentage is seen, like 1-5%, it could very likely be how that employee is watching and that they might not have a good connection to the Internet.

SUMMARY

There are many use cases for internal video, ranging from training to rallying the team and strengthening employee ties to a company. Furthermore, there are strategies that can improve asset performance, from mobile compatibility to closed captions, while also tools to track use and quality of delivery to prove ROI.

The techniques outlined in this white paper are accessible using IBM Watson Media solutions, including real-time content monitoring, built-in security using a corporate directory for login, and Watson-powered AI capabilities to streamline workflows and improve discoverability.

Schedule a demo to learn more about executing on the strategies outlined here.

About IBM Watson Media

Created in January 2016, IBM Watson Media brings together innovations from IBM's R&D labs with the cloud video platform capabilities of Clearleap and Ustream. Through the unit, IBM delivers a powerful portfolio of video services that spans open API development, digital and visual analytics, simplified management and consistent delivery across global industries. IBM Watson Media supports top media and enterprise companies with reliable video on-demand and streaming services.

For more information on IBM Watson Media, please visit www.ibm.com/cloud-computing/solutions/video.



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Footnotes

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