



You oughta be in pictures ... well, at least on YouTube

Why installers should be using video to connect with customers and prospects

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One of the most famous movie quotes comes from Gloria Swanson as Norma Desmond, the silent movie queen whom “talkies” passed by.

In her less than triumphant return to a movie set, she descends a curving staircase and announces, “Mr. DeMille, I’m ready for my close-up.”

Every small business owner in America, including every garage door and gate installer, is probably the antithesis of Norma. None are ready for their close-up.

Most are too busy with day-to-day customer needs to find time to make or use videos to boost awareness of their business. That is understandable, but with business opportunities increasingly driven by mobile phones and video content, it pays to give the medium a try — especially

during a pandemic when homeowners will be carefully vetting which companies they let into their homes and garages.

Why do customers search for videos?

In our increasingly digital world, homeowners seek out and view videos for

of who you are, how professional you are, the size of your operation, what your trucks look like, and more. Think of it as an online dating profile.

Sometimes homeowners are just trying to find a quick how-to video to see if they can solve a small problem on their own. You might logically ask, “If I show them

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a variety of reasons. For one, prospective vendors are always getting screen-tested. Finding your website via Google search is merely a first step. If you have video content on your site, they can get a sense

how to repair their door, why would they call me?” Here’s why:

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you can reduce nuisance calls. At the same time, you may make a memorable impression on the homeowner, which might ultimately lead to a call when their operator dies or when they need new doors.

I'm ready to take the video challenge — how do I jump in?

There are two ways to go about this: do it yourself or hire a professional. If you spend time on YouTube, you'll see there are many homemade/amateur videos out

- “DIY Garage Door Maintenance/Save Your Money” — ToolboxDIY
- “How to Lubricate Your Noisy Garage Door” — Precision Garage Door
- “How to Lube a Garage Door” — House Improvements
- “How to Maintain a Garage Door” — Lowe's Home Improvement
- “How to Lubricate Your Noisy Garage Door (Goodbye, SQUEAKS!)” — AmplifyDIY
- “How to Lube a Garage Door Properly! Mike's Garage Door” — Mike Holmes

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there that are still very effective. Since everyone with a smartphone is a budding cinematographer these days, there is hope for us all.

DIY ideas

Start by watching a lot of YouTube videos to see how other small businesses (not just garage door installers) present themselves. This will help you determine what types of videos are out there and which styles you prefer. It will also provide insight on what can be conveyed effectively via video and what type of content you should be including in your videos.

For instance, a search on YouTube for “garage door maintenance” turns up the following results (after removing the first three results, which were all paid ads):

- “Annual Garage Door Maintenance” — Just Tinkering

You might also ask the manufacturers you represent whether you can post their videos on your site as examples of companies and products you endorse for your customers.

Video techniques and strategies

If you opt to create your own videos, keep it very simple. Zoom in tight on whatever you are demonstrating or repairing, speak clearly, and try to put together a short repair or maintenance message in a single take.

It also wouldn't hurt to write out a one-page script of what you want to convey. You don't have to memorize it word for word, but it may come in handy if you have a loss for words in the middle of an explanation.

Go Pro (as in hire a professional)

Another option is to research a local video professional, preferably a single person or a small company, who can shoot and edit your videos. Do research online, view portfolios, compare prices, and conduct interviews until you find someone that specializes in small business TV commercials and video presentations.

A good “pro” should do the following:

- Help plan your video with brainstorming and/or storyboard.
- Bring quality equipment such as tripods and lights.
- Offer ideas on how to best communicate your ideas visually and audibly.
- Ensure that extraneous clutter in a garage doesn't end up in the background.
- Advise on whether drone or GoPro footage would add anything to the production.
- Shoot plenty of b-roll, covering shots from different angles to give you more options and to ensure that nothing gets missed.

Consider an actor

If you're not ready for your own close-up, you might consider hiring an on-screen actor to star in the presentation. Another option is to use a voiceover professional to read a script narrating onscreen action.

Make the cut

Unless you dabble in video editing, this part of the process is best left to a professional editor. They can help create a brand approach with a common opening and

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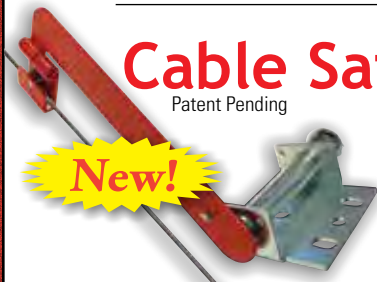
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closing by using your company logo, website, and some public domain or licensed music underneath to create a familiar association each time a customer or prospect views one of your videos.

An editor can also add onscreen graphics and captioning. If you hire a video editor, rates will vary (one source cites \$75 to \$150 per hour based on two hours of b-roll edited down to a three-minute presentation). In the age of short attention spans, you should plan for a two-minute video at the most — under one minute would be even better. If you are located near a college with a film program, you can also consider hiring a local student to do your editing work.

Your video is complete! Now, where should you upload it?

Since you don't know what social media platform a customer prefers, it pays to be in as many places as you can be. You want people to be able to find you.

The first step should be integrating your video onto your own company website. Next, begin uploading it to as many additional sites as possible to increase visibility potential. Google owns YouTube and gives videos a prominent place in search results, so that's one of the main sites you'll want to appear on.

In fact, if you haven't already, consider setting up your own YouTube channel. This will give you a platform to host your videos and the option to link them directly to your website. Next, share or post your videos on social media sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, to reach even more audiences.

Vimeo is another well-known video host worth considering. Although it doesn't have the reach of YouTube, it doesn't hurt to be there as well.

TikTok is a relatively new player in the mobile marketplace, but it is ideal for very short clips. However, the content on this site seems to be more for entertainment and personal sharing than business purposes. YouTube started off the same way, so it makes sense to continue to monitor TikTok to see how audiences and styles evolve over time.

Be seen. Be heard. Be found.

Obviously, there are many things you can do with video, but the most important reason to make one is to connect with your audience. You always want to convey useful information with professionalism, and if possible, mix in a little humor.

Your goal shouldn't be to win an Oscar. It should be to convince customers and prospects that they'll get your company's red-carpet treatment of sound advice and professional installations and repairs. Well-planned and executed videos are a great way to win them over. ■

Newton Associates is a metro Philadelphia-based business-to-business advertising and PR agency with a long history in this industry representing manufacturers of garage doors, door operators, gate operators, access control systems, radio controls, and related residential building products.