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**VIDEO MARKETING IN EDUCATION:  
ATTRACTING APPLICANTS USING THE YOUTUBE SERVICE**

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**Abstract**

Internet communications have become an effective and popular tool for integrated marketing communications both to achieve a synergistic effect in large-scale marketing campaigns and to implement short-term tasks, communicate with target audiences, maintain reputation, promote the brand, etc. One of the most effective Internet marketing tools is video marketing on social networks. The article considers the problem of using video marketing as an Internet marketing tool to attract prospective university students (applicants) using the YouTube service, as well as presents a theoretical analysis of the patterns of occurrence and types of video marketing. Based on the results of an expert survey, the advantages and opportunities of using video marketing in the university's marketing campaign are determined, and recommendations on using video marketing to attract university applicants are provided.

**Keywords**

Internet marketing – Video marketing – University applicants – Social networks – YouTube

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## Introduction

Attracting applicants to study is one of the important tasks of the university<sup>1</sup>. The number and quality of accepted applicants determine university rank in the market of educational services, and for many universities, admission of applicants to fee-paying education is one of the key income items.

An important role in attracting university applicants is assigned to video content, that is, a variety of video materials. Video content is placed in the Internet space on the official website of the university, as well as in social networks on web pages of both the university and its structural divisions. Therefore, video marketing occupies a special niche in the promotion of educational services of the university. It can provide maximum convenience for consumers' perception of information, provides great opportunities for creativity, and is one of the fastest-growing and most popular forms of Internet marketing<sup>2</sup>.

In the recent few years, the Internet has become an important and mandatory tool for promoting any business. Today consumers of different age categories, various interests, and requests, with different income levels, are presented on the Internet. All this leads to an increase in the number of sites, online advertising, and content, while the cost of attracting a client on the Internet is growing, and this process will continue in the future<sup>3</sup>.

The appearance of video marketing in marketing services is natural and appropriate. On the one hand, video marketing encourages the consumer who creates demand for concise, specific, and most importantly, meaningful content, while on the other hand, meets the needs of the seller, whose goal is to get a positive response from the widest range of consumers in the most effective way<sup>4</sup>. The results of the present research, according to which video marketing provides 66% more potential customers per year, can become an argument for this statement<sup>5</sup>. Using the word *video* in the email header increases the number of website accesses by 19%, reduces the number of unsubscriptions by 26%, and increases the number of reposts by 65%<sup>6</sup>. At that, 65% of consumers visit the company's website after having viewed a video about it<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> L. V. Stakhova y L. L. Dukhovnaya, "Features of Marketing and Management Activities of Museums", *Revista Turismo Estudios & Prácticas (RTEP)* num 4 (2020): 1-8.

<sup>2</sup> I. V. Leskova, "Level and Quality of Life in The Socio-Cultural Space of Megapolis Moscow", in: *RPTSS 2018 International Conference on Research Paradigm Transformation in Social Sciences*, pp. 704-714; V. D. Sekerin; M. N. Dudin; A. E. Gorokhova; T. P. Danko y N. I. Nikolaykin, "Applying interactive marketing methods to improve the quality of university educational services", *Quality – Access to Success* Vol: 19 num 163 (2018): 37-42 y V. D. Sekerin; M. N. Dudin; A. E. Gorokhova; V. I. Gayduk y V. I. Volkov, "Creation of a virtual image: Digital technology of the 21st century", *Amazonia Investiga* Vol: 8 num 20 (2019): 340- 348.

<sup>3</sup> S. Schwarzl y M. Grabowska, "Online marketing strategies: The future is here", *Journal of International Studies* Vol: 8 num 2 (2015): 187-196.

<sup>4</sup> A. M. Shaltoni, "From websites to social media: Exploring the adoption of internet marketing in emerging industrial markets", *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing* Vol: 32 num 7 (2017): 1009-1019.

<sup>5</sup> R. Dawson y T. Dawson, "Building your business with Video Blogging", *EventDV* Vol: 20 num 4 (2007): 22-27.

<sup>6</sup> L. Patrutiu-Baltes, "Content marketing – the fundamental tool of digital marketing", *Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Brasov* Vol: 8 num 2 (2015): 111-118.

<sup>7</sup> M.Y. Kiang y R.T. Chi, "A framework for analyzing the potential benefits of Internet Marketing", *Journal of Electronic Commerce Research* Vol: 2 num 4 (2001) 157-163.

The following advantages of video marketing are derived from the above research: heightening consumer interest, increasing site conversion, creating trust and loyalty to the manufacturer (company), simplifying purchasing decisions, broadening market coverage in social networks, and improving the distribution of video content (viral video)<sup>8</sup>.

Following researchers<sup>9</sup>, video marketing options can be grouped according to the purpose to which video sequence is used, namely, demonstration video (its task is to present the product to the consumer through a short video); brand videos (the goal of this video is to tell consumers about company's idea, mission, and values); how to video (this is a video in which the seller explains the features of using the demonstrated product); service description video (the consumer has the opportunity to clearly understand what to expect from the seller); invitation video (widely used on YouTube as an advertisement preceding the main video, when the viewer gets the opportunity to join some online event); reviews (detailed video description of the product); 360 video advertising (an unusual way to demonstrate to the consumer any stage of product manufacturing, which was, for example, successfully used by Coca Cola in 2015, amazing customers with a panoramic video).

Thus, video marketing is an innovative approach to solving marketing problems. Researchers<sup>10</sup> claim that by 2021, online videos will occupy 80% of all user Internet traffic.

However, only a small part of the research concerns the use of video marketing tools by higher education institutions, although studies<sup>11</sup> show that higher education institutions are increasingly using both Internet marketing and video marketing tools in their activities.

At the same time, it should be noted that the social networks tools in marketing practice remain poorly researched because the practice of using these tools constantly changes. Nevertheless, world science studies the economic basis of Internet marketing technologies to promote educational services. In particular, social media marketing (SMM) tools for promoting the university brand through various social networks are summarized by E. Constantinides, and Z. M. C. Stagno<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> J. Song y F. M. Zahedi, "Internet market strategies: Antecedents and implications", *Information and Management* Vol: 43 num 2 (2006): 222-238; T. P. Danko; V. M. Kiselev; L. A. Chaykovskaya; P. A. Smelov y A. E. Gorokhova, "Marketing positioning of countries in the field of innovations: questions and answers", *Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Issues* Vol: 7 num 4 (2020): 2851-2862 y V. V. Bezpalov; A. B. Tsvetkova; M. G. Shilina; V. V. Golovina y S. A. Avtonomova, "PR support in strategic investor relations at retail companies", *J Adv Pharm Educ Res* Vol: 10 num 2 (2020): 84-90.

<sup>9</sup> C. Costa-Sánchez, "Online video marketing strategies: Typology by the business sector", *Communication & Society* Vol: 30 num 1 (2017): 17-38; K. Luke, "Twelve ways to integrate video into your marketing", *Journal of Financial Planning* Vol: 26 num 9 (2013): 18-19; J. Mancuso y K. Stuth, "Seeing is believing: A researcher's guide to thinking visually", *Marketing Insights* Vol: 27 num 4 (2015): 14-15 y A. Shani; P. Chen; Y. Wang y N. Hua, "Testing the impact of a promotional video on destination image change: Application of China as a tourism destination", *International Journal of Tourism Research* Vol: 12 num 2 (2009): 116-133.

<sup>10</sup> H. Yang y Y. Wang, "Social sharing of online videos: Examining American consumers' video-sharing attitudes, intent, and behavior", *Psychology & Marketing* Vol: 32 num 9 (2015): 907-919.

<sup>11</sup> A. Jan y M. F. Khan, "Social media is nothing but a public relations tool", *The International Journal of Business & Management* Vol: 2 num 12 (2014): 272-277 y I. A. Mir y K. U. Rehnem, "Factors affecting consumer attitudes and intentions toward user-generated product content on YouTube", *Management & Marketing Challenges for the Knowledge Society* Vol: 8 num 4 (2013): 637-654.

<sup>12</sup> E. Constantinides y Z. M. C. Stagno, "Potential of social media as instruments of higher education marketing: A segmentation study", *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education* Vol: 21 num 1 (2011): 7-24.

The principles of the university reputation formation and management through Internet marketing technologies were developed by W.G. Mangold, and D.J. Faulds<sup>13</sup>.

The study by J. Nyangau and N. Bado<sup>14</sup> summarizes the main trends and develops several recommendations presenting examples of best practices of universities in social media. The most effective university practices of information dissemination in social networks are considered by T. Teixeira et al.<sup>15</sup>. Priority activities of colleges and universities on YouTube are explored by N.A. Buzzetto-More<sup>16</sup>.

The purpose of the present article is to study the possibilities of using video marketing tools to attract university applicants using the YouTube service.

*Research hypothesis* is as follows: YouTube video hosting tools have a great potential to attract university applicants and meet the marketing objectives of the admission campaign, at that video content for applicants should emphasize the uniqueness of the university.

Based on the results of the conducted research, it can be concluded that the goal set in the study was achieved.

## Methods

The following general scientific methods were used to solve the tasks set in the work:

a) theoretical approaches included analysis of peer-reviewed scientific sources on the research problem to clarify the video marketing features as a type of Internet marketing, including that in the field of higher education;

b) empirical approaches were based on a survey of experts in the field of research.

The experts were assigned the following main tasks: to elaborate an algorithm for creating high-quality video content, suggest ways to use video marketing in universities and to characterize the use of YouTube as a means of disseminating free video advertising by branded European, American, and Russian universities.

The expert survey was attended by 35 university staff members, whose professional activities were related, among other things, to the organization of the university admissions process and attracting applicants. All participants were warned about the purpose of the survey and that the organizers of the study planned to publish the results of the study in a generalized form in the future.

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<sup>13</sup> W. G. Mangold y D. J. Faulds, "Social media: The new hybrid element of the promotion mix", *Business Horizons* Vol: 52 num 4 (2009): 357-365.

<sup>14</sup> J. Nyangau y N. Bado, "Social media and marketing of higher education", *A Review of the Literature Journal of the Research Center for Educational Technology (RCET)* Vol: 8 num 1 (2012): 38-51.

<sup>15</sup> T. Teixeira; M. Wendel y R. Pieters, "Emotion-induced engagement in Internet video advertisements", *Journal of Marketing Research* Vol: 49 num 2 (2012): 144-159.

<sup>16</sup> N. A. Buzzetto-More, "An examination of undergraduate student's perceptions and predilections of the use of YouTube in the teaching and learning process", *Interdisciplinary Journal of E-Learning and Learning Objects* Vol: 10 (2014): 17-32.

## Results

According to experts, the widespread use of video materials in the university marketing campaign has several advantages (Table 1).

| No | Advantages of using video marketing  | %    |
|----|--|------|
| 1  | Video content helps entrant committing the university to memory  | 85.7 |
| 2  | Video content is an ideal tool to form and develop a university and increase its brand recognition among the target audience                             | 77.1 |
| 3  | Consumers of video content tend to disseminate it themselves, share it with friends, and discuss it, therefore a high-quality video can quickly go viral | 74.3 |
| 4  | The video can evoke strong emotions, encouraging the consumer to choose in favor of the advertised university  | 65.7 |

Note: compiled based on an expert survey; \* – percentage of expert mentions

Table 1

Advantages of using video marketing in the university marketing campaign

According to experts, the implementation of video marketing is necessary for universities if it is used correctly, for which the experts have proposed the following recommendations (Table 2).

| No | Recommendations for using video marketing  | %    |
|----|--|------|
| 1  | Creating high-quality content  | 82.9 |
| 2  | Using video as social proof of the quality of the educational services                                     | 71.4 |
| 3  | Promoting educational services in step with trends   | 62.9 |
| 4  | Creating interactive content   | 60.0 |
| 5  | Demonstrating university educational services providing a process through the video to increase conversion | 57.1 |

Note: compiled based on an expert survey; \* – percentage of expert mentions

Table 2

Recommendations for using video marketing to attract university applicants

Let take a closer look at the recommendations provided by the experts.

*Creating high-quality content.* Creating high-quality and interesting content in social networks will attract potential customers (university applicants and their parents) and involve them in the sales funnel. To date, YouTube video hosting has transformed into a kind of social network where video content is stored for a long period. Therefore, a video uploaded to YouTube will be constantly in demand by a new audience, which is growing every year (that is confirmed by proper research<sup>17</sup>). This network has a search box where one can enter

<sup>17</sup> T. V. Pogodina; V. G. Aleksakhina; V. A. Burenin; T. N. Polianova y L. A. Yunusov, "Towards the innovation-focused industry development in a climate of digitalization: the case of Russia",

a key query and thus get a list of the most popular videos with the highest number of views. Under these conditions, the video can be popular for a long time. Using high-quality videos, it is possible to attract potential consumers on a day-to-day basis. A good video clip will generate motivated traffic long enough.

2) *Using video as social proof of the educational services quality.* Before choosing a particular university, consumers want to get as much information about it and its educational services as possible, including that from the website and social networks. Therefore, the university should post a variety of videos on its YouTube account, such as interviews with the university chancellor, students, employers, or other contact audiences, as well as video reports on educational, scientific, and cognitive events. This will increase confidence in the university and provided educational services.

3) *Promoting educational services in step with trends.* YouTube is gradually catching up with Google in the popularity rating of search engines. YouTube channels with a variety of topics are gaining an audience of millions. Moreover, the whole trending content is created in a video format. This is a great opportunity for the university to attract more applicants and students.

4) *Creating interactive content.* New technologies allow creating high-quality interactive video content. The first high-quality promo videos in 360 video advertising formats have been created since 2016. At present, videos in the VR and AR formats have appeared on YouTube.

5) *Demonstrating university educational services providing a process through the video to increase conversion.* According to the results of the study, 64% of customers purchase goods only after watching a video with a full description of the product<sup>18</sup>. Therefore, universities can use videos to show all the advantages of educational institutions and services. It is watching a video clip that can significantly affect the decision-making process concerning choosing a certain educational institution or educational service.

## Discussion

According to experts, by creating informative, accessible, and easy-to-understand video content, universities can constantly increase the number of subscribers in social networks, expanding their presence in the virtual space. According to one of the respondents, "if a decade ago corporate sites were defined as the best space for subject-to-subject communication at that time, today chats, question-and-answer sections that they offer are significantly inferior to social networks in terms of efficiency, accessibility, and equality of communicants. In comparison with the latter, today the university website is considered a subject-to-object type of communication, which is a tool for implementing a presentation communication strategy. The official and unofficial university accounts in social networks should become technologies for implementing conventional communication."

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Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Issues Vol: 6 num 4 (2019): 1897-1906 y I. I. Skorobogatykh; A. V. Shishkin; T. V. Murtuzalieva; B. I. Pogorilyak y A. E. Gorokhova, "Marketing Tools for Development of the Tourist and Recreational Area", Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism Vol: 9 num 2 (2018): 343-354.

<sup>18</sup> M. Manic, "Marketing engagement through visual content", Bulletin of the Transylvania University of Brasov Vol: 8 num 2 (2015): 89-94.

At that, when analyzing the presence of official university accounts in social networks, experts note that often applicants will need to search for them independently, determining which of the web pages is official, since there are many university groups and pages with similar names in social networks.

The popularity of various social networks among young people, the ease of use, and the absence of fees for online presence (as opposed to official sites hosting) make them an attractive tool in the university marketing activities. Besides convenient and fast communication with target audiences, network communication technologies allow changing the course of a marketing campaign directly during its implementation, which is not possible when using other communication channels that require the preliminary creation of a media product. In addition to technological advantages, it is necessary to take into account the socio-cultural aspects of communication in social networks.

The most popular platform for posting videos is the YouTube platform. The YouTube service is used by branded European and American universities as a way to distribute free video ads<sup>19</sup>.

Thus, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) is one of the best technical universities both in the USA and globally. On its YouTube channel, one can see how the students live, having the opportunity to take a virtual tour of the campus, as well as watch the lectures or laboratory sessions attended by the students, etc. The University of California is the oldest and one of the most prestigious universities in California. Its YouTube channel is popular for a creative approach to content. Here one can see a biology Professor playing soccer, as well as lectures on how to promote one's smart content on Twitter. Harvard University is the US leading privately owned university, launched its own YouTube channel on September 25, 2005. Since October 28, 2005, the University of Oxford has also launched its YouTube channel named Oxford Academic. It combines video recordings of interviews with leading figures, experts, and scientists in various fields of knowledge, as well as familiarizes with the university news. The YouTube channel of the Cambridge University presents videos about research, discussions, and innovations online, directly from the University's laboratories and classrooms. Thus, a brief analysis has shown that universities post educational or scientific content on their YouTube channels. The main form of transmitting information to the audience is the speaker's monologue. Besides, considerable attention is paid to campus life.

According to experts, Russian universities are also implementing video marketing tools in their activities, partly using the YouTube service. YouTube channels of Russian universities have successfully tested news videos, university video tours, thematic playlists, amateur student videos, lectures by individual teachers, studies of some university researchers, partner projects, as well as video messages from university admissions secretaries, where they talk about the university admission criteria, placing this information on the thematic playlist of the admission section. At that, according to experts, during the university admission campaigns, the university playlists are kept for a long time at first rankings in the YouTube search engine.

However, experts believe that Russian universities are only taking the first steps towards implementing video marketing in comparison with foreign competitors. According to

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<sup>19</sup> A. Almobarraz, "Utilization of YouTube as an information resource to support university courses", *The Electronic Library* Vol: 36 num 1 (2018): 71-81.

one of the respondents, "to effectively use this tool, a marketing department should be established within the organizational structure of the university, whose one of the functions should be to promote the educational institution in social networks, including maintaining a YouTube channel, creating and promoting video content."

According to experts, video clips should cover key events, virtual doors open days, and discuss interesting and relevant topics with speakers who are practitioners in a particular field. The channel's video content should be supplemented with socially significant materials. To do this, the university should create a motivation system for students and teachers that would help developing video marketing by creating interesting and high-quality video content.

According to experts, to track the effectiveness of video content, it is necessary to define the following indicators for determining this effectiveness: 1) the percentage of completed views; 2) comparison of the CTR of mailings with and without video (CTR or click-through ratio is an indicator that counts the number of clicks on an ad, showing the effectiveness of the advertising campaign); 3) the number of video views per one cold contact (a contact of a person who may or may not become a client); 4) the number of clicks to the university site after viewing.

In general, based on the results of the conducted expert survey, certain conclusions can be drawn and recommendations developed for university marketing departments that moderate official university websites.

1. Work in social media, as well as other activities of university marketing departments, require a clear definition of goals, objectives, communication methods, and the predicted effect of the communication act. The lack of strategic planning of marketing activities in social media affects the qualitative and quantitative characteristics of the communication process on official university websites.

2. In the course of communication, the presentation-type communication strategy is mainly implemented, although the YouTube service represents conventional communication. Public Relations (PR) departments need to encourage followers to engage in two-way communication on social media pages.

3. Incomplete representation of information about the university on YouTube official websites is a certain obstacle for university applicants. Official university websites should contain links to all official social media accounts that are moderated by the university marketing department.

## **Conclusion**

Using trending tools to promote educational services will allow the university to become a leader in the educational services market. Consequently, domestic higher education institutions need to more actively use video marketing methods and technologies to promote their educational services market. To do this, each educational institution needs to learn how to effectively implement video marketing, study the target audience in advance, take into account its features and needs, and then determine the goal of video marketing as well as the video format. In the course of marketing activities, it is necessary to track the effectiveness of the posted content using performance metrics and focus on the result when creating new videos.

University channels on the YouTube network can be interesting and informative, containing both promotional films and advertising video clips from university marketing departments, as well as content, created and edited by students. As a result, YouTube channels can adequately represent both universities in general and campus life in particular. At that, marketing departments need to pay special attention to creating unique video content. As shown by the experience of foreign universities, the emphasis should be placed on learning and research conducted by the university.

Thus, the results of the conducted study have confirmed the hypothesis that YouTube video hosting tools have great potential to attract university applicants and meet the marketing objectives of the admission campaign, at that, video content for applicants should emphasize the uniqueness of the university.

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