

# YouTube video makes a dealership come alive online

It's hard to go a week anymore without hearing about a viral video — a baby babbled something cute; and animal attacked a person; a race had an amazing finish. Millions watch them all.

Free video posting website YouTube has exploded. It's one of the top three most frequently visited websites in the world, said Bob McCann, ARI Network Service's director of education. Anyone can create a channel or hosting page for videos. Honda and Yamaha have channels, as do dealers and enthusiasts.

"Video is hot on the web right now. It just helps you really well," McCann said.

He suggests dealers each start at least one channel. Multiple sites would be ideal for a dealership that sells a variety of products.

Once a channel is created, dealers can upload as many videos as they want.

"Anytime you can get one, the more the better," McCann said.

"The more choice out there, the better."

Uploading and sharing a video is simple, especially when a lower bandwidth is used during taping.

"Once you get your account, it's just a matter of bandwidth, and what's unique with YouTube is it knows what it needs and uploads your video in the desired resolution," McCann explained.

Video from YouTube can be imbedded onto a dealer's website easily, so viewers can stop on that site, rather than be shuttled to YouTube without stopping on the dealer site. Other payoffs are also available with imbedding.

"Having a link from a site that big, like YouTube, down to your site, which is very insignificant compared to the rest of the Web world, gives you a significant bump in search engine optimization (SEO)," McCann explained. "Your credibility quotient is higher because Google, Bing and Yahoo give more credibility to sites that have links

to other large websites."

He also suggests that dealers provide their Web address at the end of videos.

The description of the video is important. It appears under the video on the YouTube page where it's posted. A quality description not only tells a viewer what to expect from the video, but also aids in SEO, so searchers can find the video. After a video is posted, YouTube will ask if the owner wants similar videos suggested after the video is played. McCann recommends that option be turned off.

Videos posted by the dealership should be short and to the point.

"Typically anything for entertainment — the old adage is make them wish there was more, so shorter is better," McCann said.

Each shoot should be somewhat professional. Dealer videos may look homemade, but little touches will enhance the quality. The camera style isn't of utmost importance. With video intended for online viewing only, a one-button video camera, or even one available on a smartphone, would suffice. What's more vital is how the video is shot. The cameraperson should keep lighting in mind and be careful about moving or shaking the camera.

"You should hardly ever move the camera," McCann explained. "You get your camera set, and you make your shot. If you want a new shot, turn off the camera and turn it back on."

Even with product walk-throughs, steady shots should be taken then combined through editing. Editing programs can be simple to find, inexpensive and easy to use. They should be used to clean up shots and add transitions and titles.

"With everything being digital now, now you can shoot it once, twice, three times, and chose the best video out of them," McCann said.

Other than product walk-throughs, other videos of interest might be of events or service demonstrations. McCann said some dealerships might not want to include service instructionals because they would rather complete the work themselves, but doing so sets up a dealer as an authority in the industry.

"It's just a nice service that puts you in good light, and when they need you, you're going to be their first stop," he explained.

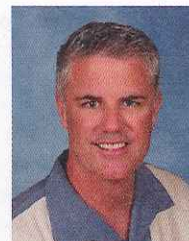
If videos are too complicated for dealership staff or take up too much time, McCann recommends that dealers hire a local advertising firm to help create their videos.

Manufacturers also produce videos free for dealers to use. Most can be found in the dealers' sections of the manufacturers' websites.

"You can just download those, and you can just put those on your channel and put those videos right on your website," McCann said.

Videos give customers a unique look into a dealership and highlight products and events more than photos. Used correctly, they're just another tool in the box to market the dealership and drive potential traffic. **PSB**

- Liz Hochstedler



BOB McCANN

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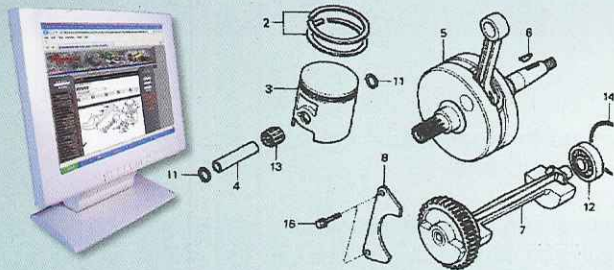
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## Social media help

Social networking for dealers is fairly simple, however it can become frustrating and cumbersome for dealers who don't understand the sites or don't have the staff time or expertise to implement a quality social media plan. For those dealers needing help, industry web providers offer a variety of services.

Duo Web Solutions provides full service social media setup and implementation. The company helps dealers devise a strategy for social media, trains dealers how to blog and ghost writes for dealers who don't have the time to write themselves.

PowerSports Network is introducing a social media product this summer which will allow dealers to post to Facebook directly from their website management system. The company can also post Facebook widgets and logos prominently on a PSN dealer's site.

ARI Network Services offers social media tools on its WebsiteSmart platform. Dealers can build Facebook and other social media wall widgets into their WebsiteSmart page, and customers can "like" inventory from the sites to Facebook.

50 Below sets up social media widgets on dealer's websites as well. Soon, the company will also offer the ability for customers to "like" inventory from the sites to Facebook and comment on the inventory. Also, YouTube embedding is coming soon.