

PART 7: SHARE PHOTOS AND VIDEOS ONLINE

SOCIAL MEDIA FOR SMALL BUSINESS

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OVERVIEW

Photos and videos can engage customers and convey more about a company and its people, products and services than text alone. According to [comScore](#), Americans viewed 12 billion videos online in May 2008, representing an increase of 45 percent versus one year ago. Those numbers aren't unique to the United States – online video views are soaring globally, especially among the next generation of consumers.

In the past, some small businesses avoided multi-media due to concerns about high production and distribution costs, but that is changing. In fact, a [new study](#) published by University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Center for Marketing Research shows that 45 percent of [Inc. 500](#) companies are using online video, compared to 24 percent just one year ago.

This is due, in part, to new technologies and social media that make it easy and inexpensive to share photos and videos online. In this section, we will suggest tools, techniques and best practices to help you get started.

THE OPPORTUNITY FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

Whether you are communicating to customers, prospects, media or digital influencers, photos and videos can be a great way to tell your story. For instance, you might share:

- **Photos** of new products, happy customers, employees, locations, executives or events.
- **Videos** of products in action, customer testimonials or behind-the-scenes interviews.

The challenge has always been two-fold: capturing high-quality photos and videos inexpensively and sharing them efficiently in places they will be found.

The good news is that prices of digital cameras and camcorders have dropped significantly. With a few hundred dollars and a little know-how, you can capture the shots you need without hiring an expensive crew.

The next step is to share them. Of course, you can post them to your Web site (which may be a cumbersome process) or email them (which may be hindered by file size issues) to customers and media who have said it's alright to send them e-mail. You can also try sharing them through social media tools like [Flickr](#) and [YouTube](#) where millions of people go to view content that interests them.

GETTING STARTED

Flickr is a leading online photo management and sharing application that lets you share and organize photos more easily. You can upload photos to Flickr.com from a work or home computer, from the Web, from mobile devices or from any software you use to manage your content. Then, you can share your photos with others through the Flickr Web site, RSS feeds, email, blog posts and more. Flickr also makes it easy to organize your photos with "tags" and to discover what other Flickr users are tagging. For example, if you own a jewelry store in New York, you might search for photos tagged "[cocktail ring](#)" to get a sense for what's popular.

GETTING STARTED (continued)

Here's how you can get started:

- **Create** a Flickr account on www.flickr.com. It only takes a minute and it's free.
- **Upload** photos you want to share in one of five ways:
 - Via the Flickr Web page.
 - Via the Flickr Uploadr (available for both PC and Mac).
 - Via iPhoto, Aperture, or Windows XP plugins.
 - Via email.
 - Via various free third-party desktop programs.
- **Edit** your photos as necessary.
- **Organize** your photos into "sets" or "collections."
- **Share** your photos with the entire world or with a specific group, which may be public, invite only or completely private.

YouTube is a leading online video site that allows people to easily upload and share video clips on YouTube.com and across the Internet through Web sites, mobile devices, blogs and email. YouTube receives about 71 million unique users each month and hundreds of millions of video views daily. If you have teenagers, YouTube is not new to you!

As a small business, you can create a YouTube "brand channel" – a destination page for your brand on YouTube that allows you to connect and build relationships with your customers, media and other key audiences. Your channel can display your company's videos, bulletins and subscribers, as well as links that let other people connect with your brand by sending you a message, sharing your channel with friends or leaving comments on videos. For example, Dell created a [channel](#) to syndicate its Direct2Dell [vlogs](#) more broadly.

Again, it only takes a few simple steps to get started:

- **Create** a brand channel on YouTube. You can find a helpful guide with detailed instructions, wireframe designs and case studies [here](#). Describe your company in detail, and include your Web site URL so interested viewers can check there for more information.
- **Upload** your company's videos to your YouTube channel. Be sure to name and tag them with clear, descriptive terms that other people may use to search for YouTube videos on the topic. It's also important to consider that Google is starting to return universal search results, so a video placed on YouTube can actually have a positive impact on your company's search results.
- **Promote** your company's YouTube channel or specific videos on your Web site, through your e-mail newsletter, or through other direct outreach to key audiences.
- **Engage** your audience by encouraging them to add comments, rate videos, share videos or even create their own for your channel.
- **Update** your content frequently to keep it fresh. This is critical to keep people coming back.

BEST PRACTICES

Based on our experience at Dell and conversations with small- and medium-size business owners, we've identified several best practices for sharing photos and video online, such as:

- Invest in a digital camera/camcorder and basic editing software to produce content about your company and its people, products and services. We suggest a high-definition digital camcorder, which have dropped significantly in price, and user-friendly software like [Windows Movie Maker](#).
- Assign a team or individual to create and manage your company's photo and video libraries on Flickr, YouTube and other destinations.
- Use Flickr and YouTube to share content with media and digital influencers. It's faster and more convenient for you – and for them – than posting this content to your own Web site or emailing the files. Also, be sure to offer a wide selection of photos and videos from which to choose.

CASE

[Blendtec](#), the manufacturer of some of the world's most powerful blenders and other kitchen appliances, made a name for itself through clever and wildly entertaining use of YouTube. The company created a [brand channel](#) and more than 75 videos featuring a mad scientist type who sets out to answer the question, "Will it blend?" He tests everything from iPhones to golf clubs in the Blendtec blender to demonstrate its power, and yes, they all blend. The channel has more than 100,000 subscribers, and the most popular videos each have received more than 5 million views and 10,000 comments.

ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA FOR SMALL BUSINESS

Visit www.facebook.com/dellsocialmedia to read all eight guides written by Dell's Small Business and Communities & Conversations teams:

- Part 1: Learn to Listen
- Part 2: Join the Conversation
- Part 3: Start a Blog
- Part 4: Tap into Twitter
- Part 5: Crowdfund Your Next Big Idea
- Part 6: Harness the Power of Facebook
- Part 7: Share Photos and Videos Online
- Part 8: Measure Your Success Online

We hope you will join this Facebook community, share your own ideas, and continue the conversation with Dell and small businesses around the world.