B2B RESEARCH

B2B Marketing



Where is all the B2B Video?

Research, analysis, best practice

In association with: ITN PRODUCTIONS

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INTRODUCTION

Despite the internet's undisputable obsession with all things video, the B2B marketing industry's adoption of the format has been unmistakably slow.

A familiar reluctance to experiment, issues with budget and fears regarding ROI were all possible explanations for the lack of high quality B2B video, but – given the examples that do exists where video has worked well in B2B – we wanted to find out whether we're anywhere the tipping point where B2B video enters the mainstream.

We partnered with ITN Productions, ITN's dedicated content hub, to investigate the state of B2B video use and ask: 'Where is all the B2B video?'

This research project launched in late March 2014, and proved to be incredibly popular with the industry. The survey attracted the responses of 172 mid- to senior-level marketing professionals, and their feedback can be found distilled into the various components of this report.

Included in this report is the research analysis of the survey, research comment from ITN Productions, best practice advice on how to utilise B2C techniques in B2B video, an infogrpahic detailing the research's key findings, and the key takeaways from a B2B Leaders roundtable event staged in mid-April.

As a complete package it can be seen as providing a very clear 'state of the market' take on how B2B marketers are currently using video, how this use is about to change, and how they should be acting if they want to see their video investments fly.



ALEX ASPINALL
HEAD OF CONTENT
B2B MARKETING

Where is all the B2B video?

Despite a few high profile successes, quality B2B video is still notable mainly by its absence. **Alex Aspinall** reports

Figure 1. Which of these content types allows you to stand out from competition?



It has become impossible to ignore the incredible volume of video content being consumed each day on the internet. We can save the debate regarding exactly what relevance this has for the average niche-focused B2B brand for another day. But, given video's undisputable rise to prominence in recent years, questions do have to be asked regarding the wider B2B industry's use of video. Namely: where is all the good quality B2B video hiding? And why are B2B marketers so far behind their consumer counterparts when it comes to utilising this format?

We recently partnered with ITN Productions, ITN's content hub, to investigate the current state of video use in the B2B marketing industry. It is our aim to gain an understanding of how video is currently being used, assess where barriers to greater video adoption exist, and to use these findings to help promote best practice adoption across the market.

The good

Encouragingly, our research highlights many ways in which B2B marketers are very positive about video. For example, of the 164 respondents that reflected on their previous use of video, only a very small minority of four per cent described their efforts as being 'unsuccessful'. Twenty-four per cent described their previous video use as 'very successful,' while 58 per cent selected 'successful'. Interestingly, 14 per cent reported they didn't know whether their previous video marketing efforts were successful. There are several possible reasons for this. But it's fair to say the ways in which the video's success was being measured will have impacted on the responses provided to this question.

Further positivity was reported regarding predictions surrounding the amount of B2B video we can expect to see being produced over the course of the year ahead. Indeed, if our research findings are anything to go by, 2014 will very much be the year of B2B

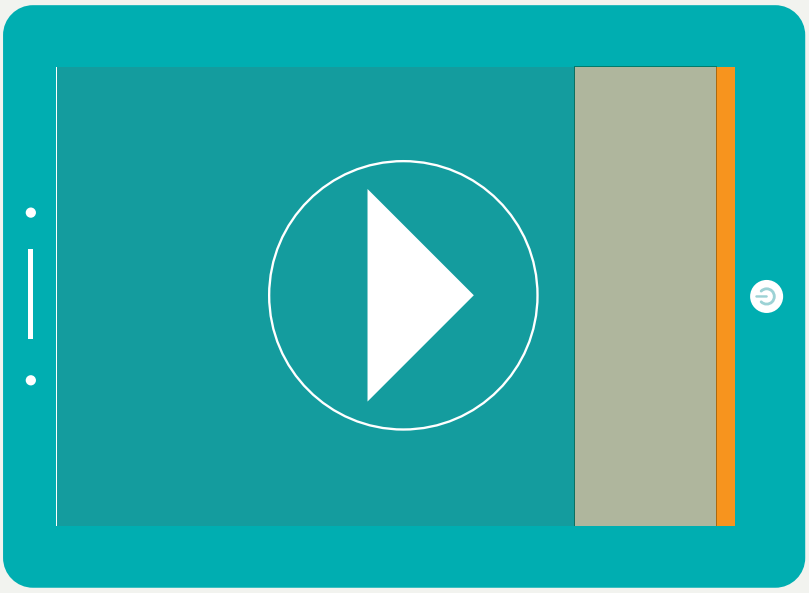
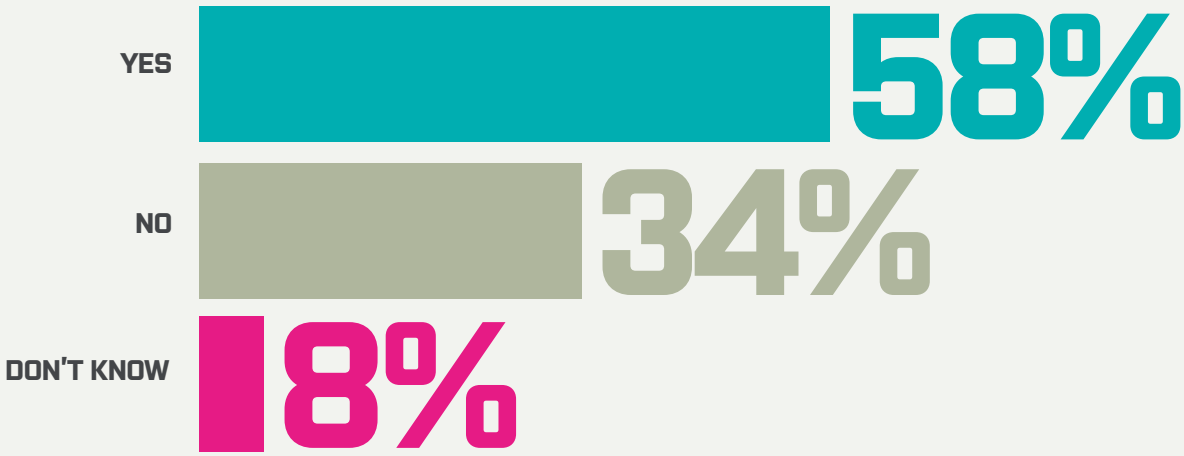


Figure 2. Will you be using video in the coming year?

Figure 3. Is there a video skills gap in your marketing department?



video. When asked to state how likely they were to use video as part of their marketing activity over the coming 12 months, a huge majority of 78 per cent stated that it was 'very likely,' 20 per cent said it was 'possible' and only two per cent described it as being unlikely (see figure 2).

Similarly, it was reassuring to see only one per cent of respondents were expecting industry-wide use of video to decrease in the coming 12 months. Eleven per cent anticipated video use would remain about the same, while 60 per cent predicted an 'increase' and 28 per cent predicted a 'significant increase'.

It makes sense to briefly explore what is behind such encouraging predictions; after all, B2B marketing departments are not always the most decisive when it comes to trying new things.

It seems in this instance, video's soon to materialise growth in B2B is down to a belief among its marketers that it offers something new. Marketers appear to believe in the power of video. It was cited as the content type 'most likely to resonate with respondents' target market' (selected by 66 per cent), as well as the content type most likely to allow respondents' brands to 'stand out from the competition' (selected by 73 per cent). In the latter question, the second most popular answer – blogs – was selected by only 37 per cent of respondents.

All these figures clearly suggest the industry, en masse, expects not only to be using more video in the future but also that when they do use it, there will be significant benefits to doing so. This is great news. However, somewhat paradoxically, another question to deliver similarly unified responses focused on the barriers serving to limit wider investment in video.

The bad

Given the incredible level of positivity our respondents reported regarding how they viewed video, and the advantages it can offer their brand activities, the inevitable follow-on question has to be: 'Why aren't more B2B marketers already making better use of the format?' The answer, it seems, is

the familiar mix of a lack of resources and a lack of understanding.

We'll deal with the resources issue first. When asked directly to reflect on what barriers, if any, were serving to prohibit increasing video use, 'not enough time' was selected by 56 per cent, 'expense' by 55 per cent, and – tellingly – the third most popular option, with 30 per cent, was a 'lack of experience and skills'.

Though relatively little can be done to provide comfort to the overworked and under-resourced, they may be able to take some solace from the fact that video production need not always be as expensive and time consuming as many assume. Creating the right briefs, understanding how to evaluate success and hiring in the right experts – be they internal recruits or external partners – can all go a long way towards addressing the resource issue highlighted in the research.

Of a wider appeal, and something more central to our research focus, is the relatively significant number reporting a lack of video experience is actually serving to hinder wider use. Almost a third admitted a lack of experience and/or skills was serving to derail greater video adoption. It's likely, however, that this figure is really significantly higher. When asked whether a skills and knowledge gap existed in their marketing departments, only 34 per cent said there was no gap. Fifty-eight per cent said there were video skills gaps, while the remaining eight per cent weren't sure.

The ugly

These shortcomings are understandable – more understandable even than skills gaps we've reported on previously in areas such as social media and data best practice, given that they are distinct from anything that could really be considered as a 'traditional' B2B skill. But that doesn't mean they shouldn't be addressed. Just like with social media, organisations failing to incorporate the skills requirements of the digital world into their teams risk being left behind.

Another area in which marketers are potentially playing with fire when it comes to video is in ignoring the requirement to put into place definitive brand guidelines. Relatively few brands these days operate without social media guidelines or basic house style sheets for written copy, logo use and corporate colour palettes. But far more are failing to consider how these elements of their brand would work in video.

Sixty-eight per cent of respondents reported having no video brand guidelines in place, while six per cent didn't know whether they had any, leaving only just over a quarter (26 per cent) of B2B brands with video guidelines in place. It's likely this figure would be higher among B2C organisations, more used to producing video content. It also goes some way towards reinforcing the reported skills and knowledge gaps and explaining why there are relatively few examples of genuinely standout videos emanating from the B2B world.

The future

By taking a broad view of our research, it's possible to see a very bright future for B2B video. The market is clearly very eager to start producing the kind of high quality video content usually reserved for consumer campaigns. B2B marketers also seem to have a very strong understanding of what video can offer their brands and their target audiences.

But in order to start reaping the anticipated rewards, work still has to be done in terms of developing the requisite skills and experience to deliver high quality commercial video content. It's important marketers supplement skills areas in which they are confident – brand understanding, strategy and content creation – with video-specific knowledge to really make the difference.

Just as with any other element of the digital marketing mix, most brands are on a learning curve. And video is no different. The main challenge is that lessons need to be learnt quickly in the digital era, and B2B video is no longer content to play second fiddle. The days of being able to get away with substandard content 'because it is aimed at a business audience' are long gone. If, indeed, they ever existed.

Figure 4. Do you have video brand guidelines in place?

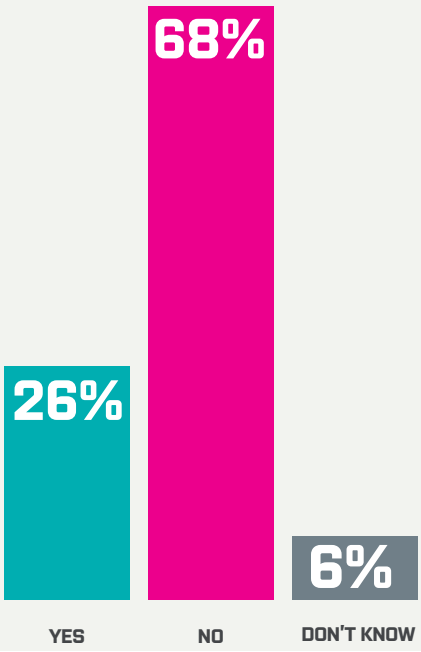
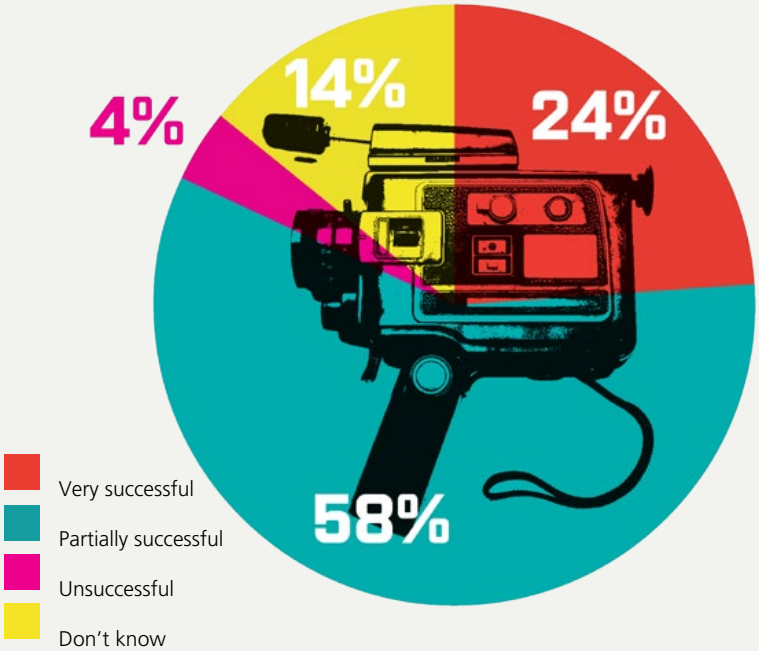


Figure 5. Would you regard your previous experience with video as being successful?



Why is content marketing failing so many businesses?



SIMON BAKER
HEAD OF CORPORATE AND CREATIVE VIDEO, ITN PRODUCTIONS

The filmmakers at ITN Productions have been watching from the sidelines as the B2B marketing community has started to see video content as an essential tool. Although we felt the sentiment towards perceived value of using video content within B2B was improving, we rarely get to see campaigns that have broken the mould between traditional B2B films and the more creative B2C cousins. We also felt that there was a gap in significant research to assess what the B2B community thought about video. Cue our friends at B2B Marketing.

We are no strangers to helping clients redefine what is possible when using video to market, communicate and to tell great stories. So seeing the standard of video content B2B marketers use falls below what we produce with our B2C clients, we asked B2B Marketing to undertake research into the use of B2B video. This is a great opportunity for us all to get insight into the considerations for using video, and a tangible snapshot of our attitudes toward it.

The results of the research make a really exciting case for the use of video in B2B marketing, which leads us believe marketers are on the verge of trying new ideas and maximising the budget allocated to video content. Marketers have a really positive experience of using video content, with 82 per cent of those who have used it in the past saying it has been successful.

This success can be used as a foundation for the 78 per cent of respondents who say they are very likely to use video in the next 12 months, and a further 20 per cent saying they will probably use it. Meaning that for 98 per cent of those surveyed video is most definitely on the agenda for 2014. This is in line with the prediction that 90 per cent of all web traffic is predicted to be video next year.

A key finding from our survey was that video was seen as the most compelling content types to resonate with a B2B audience, that's over and above events, blogs, direct mail and press adverts.

The main objectives marketers see video suited towards are building a brand and engaging audiences, this shows the movement towards speaking to our B2B audiences in the same way that B2C marketers target theirs. We see this driving a trend towards breaking down traditional barriers between 'types' of audience, and looking more at engaging content that speaks to 'people,' no matter if it's B2B or B2C.

So with a clear trend in the growing adoption of B2B video, and the value that people place on it, we might be led to believe the future looks rosy. However, the findings also show a disparity between the value people place on video and the know-how to realise videos true potential. Almost 60 per cent see a skills gap in how to create effective video content.

We are constantly encouraged by the B2B market's willingness to break new ground by using video, and those who do are sure to reap the benefits of having real standout in their markets.

"Almost 60 per cent see a skills gap in how to create effective video content"

HOW TO: Use B2C techniques in B2B video

B2B video has gained a bad reputation. But **Charlotte De Maria**, account manager at ITN Productions, urges marketers to adopt some B2C techniques to make engaging video

Recent research from ITN Productions and B2B Marketing highlighted that, although B2B marketers are eager to embrace using more video in the coming year, there remains a significant skills and knowledge gap in the industry. This is serving to limit B2B adoption of video, as well as reinforce the gulf that exists between the general quality of video in the consumer sphere and that in the B2B world.

While the language and messaging is different in B2B and B2C campaigns, the audience is always the same: people. One of the best examples of a B2B marketing campaign from 2013 was undoubtedly the Volvo Trucks social media campaign featuring Jean-Claude Van Damme, which was shared significantly in B2C circles despite being 100 per cent B2B. Without suggesting B2B marketers should spend millions on glossy viral ads, here are a few pointers on how to apply B2C techniques in B2B video:

1. It's not as costly as you think

For 43 per cent of our survey respondents, the most prohibitive factors when commissioning video were lack of time and budget. These days, sophisticated camera equipment has dramatically improved picture quality. As a fundamental, B2B marketers should consider the aesthetic value of video as being just as important as the messaging. Something as simple as using a quirky filming location, like a rooftop, can make the content much more visually engaging. If the editorial content is excellent but the visual quality is poor, you can risk damaging your brand's image in the mind of your audience. Simple enhancements like on-brand graphics, good audio design, and a cinematic colour grade will significantly lift the look and feel of your video content without breaking the bank.

2. Storytelling is your friend

Sixty-six per cent of our sample regarded video as the leading type of content likely to resonate with their target markets.

No matter how dry or corporate the business culture, there are always stories to illustrate through video. For Morrisons we created a series of 'Money makeovers' daytime TV style programmes to help them communicate a new financial product. This format helped to shape the corporate messaging into a story that would resonate with a mass audience.

3. Plan your annual strategy

When setting your marketing strategy for the year, include video. Don't let it be the last thing you consider. Try to identify where video would perform well as part of your campaign plan. Once you know where the opportunity for video is, get support early on from your production company.

> "No matter how dry or corporate the business culture, there are always stories to illustrate through video"



CHARLOTTE DE MARIA
ACCOUNT MANAGER
ITN PRODUCTIONS

Almost 60 per cent of our sample said there was a video skills and knowledge gap in their department. As a starting point, write a loose brief for your agency covering key messages, objectives, length and style of film. A good video agency will lead you through the production process and write up storyboards and narrative scripts forming the storyline for your film.

4. Market your people

Think about who in your organisation, or client or partner organisations, would communicate well on camera; who are the brand ambassadors and confident characters? The audience has to believe in the authenticity of your messaging by using real people. For IPG Mediabrands, we came up with an innovative script-reading exercise in which we see the CEO practicing his delivery of the key messages to his imaginary audience, bloopers and all. Humour is another great tool to use.

5. Don't forget to share

Too many marketers put content online and wait for it to be the next viral hit. Cost-efficient and targeted boosting of your posts can have a dramatic impact on your views. The way you share content has a big part to play. For example, if you share a picture from your film on Facebook with a link to the video on YouTube, it is much more likely to trend on peoples' newsfeeds than if you simply upload the video directly to Facebook.

Your B2B audience is probably using social media, and seeding through Facebook couldn't be easier. Paying as little as £30 can boost your views significantly. We tested this theory by boosting a video link on our Facebook page and had 40,000 more views in our target market's newsfeeds. Once you have made great content, make sure people see it.

6. Include a bold call-to-action

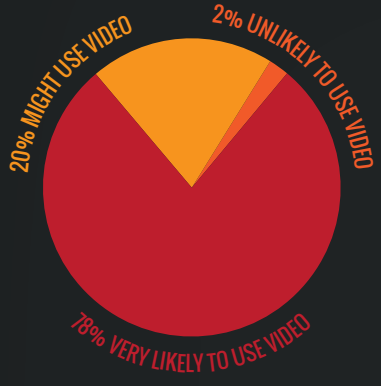
A clear and simple call-to-action will enable you to more effectively measure the ROI of your content. Spell it out for the viewer and make it very simple for them to do. Ask people to like, share, tweet and find out more online. It takes us 40 per cent longer to process a complicated sentence in place of a simpler one. Avoid over-complicating the closing message with corporate jargon. Less is more.

Regardless of which side of the B2B or B2C divide a marketer works on, all marketing is person to person. It has been proven that communicating with simpler, clearer language makes us look more intelligent because we are not hiding behind needless corporate props. This translates directly into your video messaging. If the message is clear, visually and editorially compelling, then it will resonate and stay with your audience.

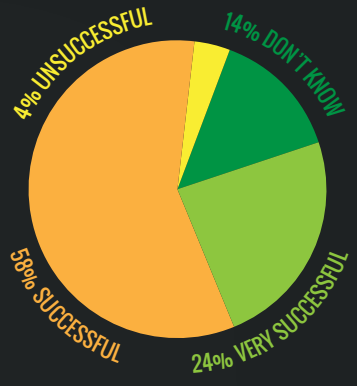
WHERE IS ALL THE B2B VIDEO?

B2B marketers are way behind their consumer cousins when it comes to making effective use of video. But why is this? B2B Marketing recently partnered with ITN Productions on a research project to gain an understanding of current B2B video use. This infographic provides an overview of the key findings. More detailed research analysis and best practice guidance is available at b2bmarketing.net.

1 VIDEO USE SET TO SOAR IN B2B MARKETING IN COMING 12 MONTHS



2 HOW WOULD YOU REGARD YOUR PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES WITH VIDEO MARKETING?



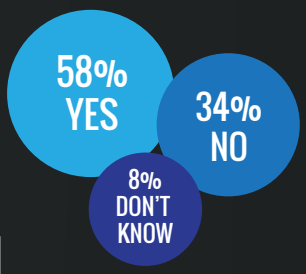
3 MOST B2B ORGANISATIONS HAVE NO VIDEO BRAND GUIDELINES IN PLACE. DO YOU?



4 TOP CONTENT TYPES MOST LIKELY TO RESONATE WITH B2B TARGET AUDIENCE



5 ARE THERE VIDEO SKILLS GAPS PRESENT IN YOUR MARKETING DEPARTMENT?



6 TOP CONTENT TYPES LIKELY TO MAKE YOU STAND OUT FROM YOUR COMPETITORS

1: VIDEO 2: BLOGS
3: LONG FORM WRITING

7 TOP B2B VIDEO METRICS USED BY MARKETERS



8 TOP OBJECTIVES FOR B2B VIDEO



Where is all the B2B video?

On 10 April 2014 a group of B2B marketing leaders, drawn from a diverse range of industry sectors, met at B2B Marketing's office in London to discuss the findings of this research project, as well as the B2B industry's wider use of video. Copied on this page are a selection of the key points from the day.

"You always have to ensure you have the right message and the right vehicle with which to reach your prospects"

Changing times

There was a consensus that B2B brands are now using content in ways they previously did not. Essentially, they are getting better at focusing on the customer and speaking to individuals rather than organisations. Videos are a good way of doing this, if used correctly.

Right message, right vehicle

You always have to ensure you have the right message and the right vehicle with which to reach your prospects. Though it is sensible to carry out a certain degree of content re-cycling it's important to remember that certain messages and content resonate with different people in different ways. There was a consensus that videos of over three minutes in length were going to have to work very hard to retain people's attention.

Video is suitable for different purposes

Video content is regarded as being appropriate for various different stages of the buying and selling process, and it sits particularly neatly with an inbound strategy. Produced correctly, a business can simultaneously have some video assets working towards ensuring it makes it on to consideration short lists and other content emphasising the how, what and why elements, while also having video designed to attract and retain the best staff. They can all work simultaneously.

Obsession with ROI clouds the issue

Though everyone agreed that marketers must work to objectives and be able to quantify their contribution to the business' bottom line, it was widely agreed that an unhealthy obsession with ROI and unhelpful metrics was responsible for limiting what could be achieved with video (and other formats and techniques). The ability to look at the bigger picture was regarded favourably.

Where is all the B2B video?

Skills are lacking

Video sits outside the B2B marketer's classical skill set. There are issues with production and creation but less so with the actual utilisation of assets once they exist. This is where a video agency can add most value. The main thing clients need from a video agency is their ability to add creativity into the mix. Indeed, in many cases that is all they need.

Content overload

In line with many areas of marketing at present, there was a fear that the sheer volume of content being produced is making it difficult to stand out. And though this isn't quite true yet of video, a similar situation may well be on the way. It still comes down to carrying out good marketing to make sure video works for your brand.

Brand guidelines

There was a mix of feelings regarding exactly how helpful brand guidelines can be. In terms of video branding guidelines (covering areas such as logo use, colours and sound) the benefits were agreed upon. Guidelines are best when they facilitate consistency but not at the expense of creativity.

The tipping point

There was a unanimous feeling around the table that B2B video has come of age. B2B brands are spending more time and money on it than ever before, and – in line with wider research findings – there was agreement that this trend would not be reversing any time soon. B2B video is coming of age.

"It still comes down to carrying out good marketing to make sure video works for your brand."

About B2B Marketing

B2B Marketing is the comprehensive information resource for B2B marketers. Its mission is to provide practitioners with the information they need to perform better and achieve more, whatever sector of the B2B space they are operating in.

Launched in 2004 as *B2B Marketing* magazine, it has since evolved into a multi-faceted resource, delivering a broad range of content in a variety of different forms and formats. Its key products are:

- Online community
- Magazine
- Awards
- Research and reports
- Training
- Events
- Membership

For more information on any of these products or services go to b2bmarketing.net or call +44 (0) 20 7438 1370

About ITN Productions

Since the birth of TV, video has been used to inform, educate and provide a channel through which stories can be disseminated. The story-telling power of video has long been established as a means to change perception, behaviour and attitudes.

B2B marketers are increasingly harnessing the power of video to provide deeper engagement with their clients. As brands become broadcasters and media owners in their own right, it is vital that they provide their audiences with a consistent level of creativity and quality.

According to a recent Google search, there are c. 377 million results for the search term "video production companies". So how do you choose? ITN Productions is the creative content production hub of ITN. With decades of broadcast experience at its heart, we have the expertise to conceive, produce and help you to publish stories that drive deeper engagement with your clients. As market leaders in film production for B2B markets, you can trust us to provide a platform from which we can increase the awareness and consideration of your products or service.

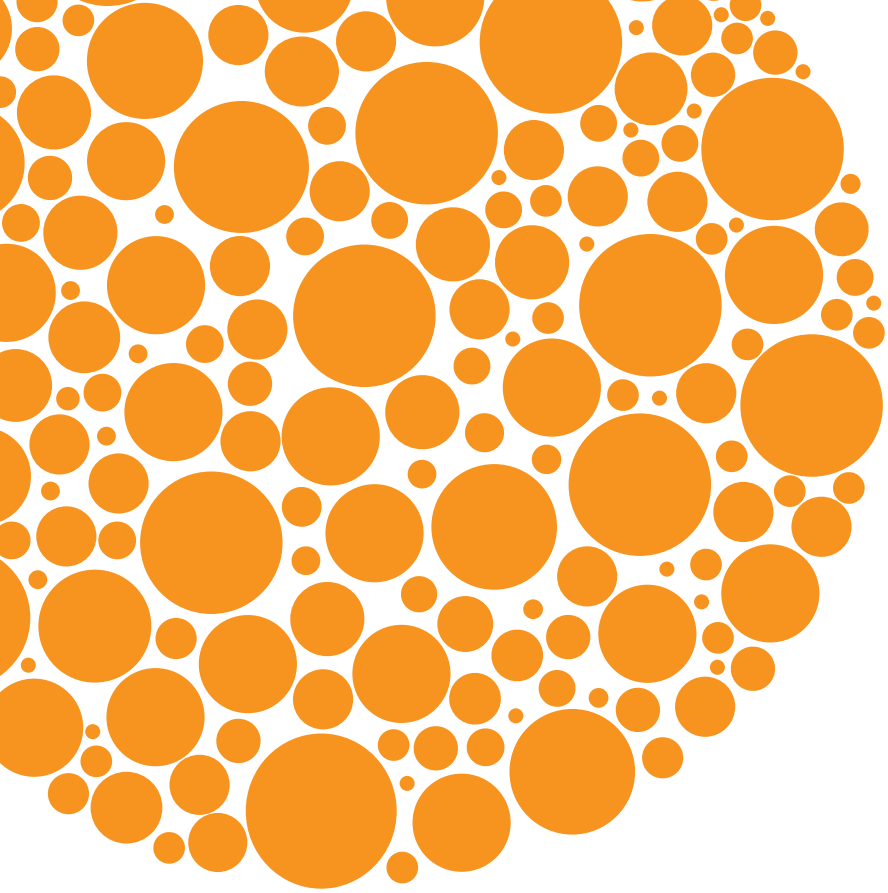
As one of the UK's leading multiplatform video producers, we have produced branded content for over 600 clients worldwide, at all budget levels. From self-shooting producers through to TV commercials production teams, we are well placed to support you in a broad range of projects.

A production partnership with ITN Productions will provide you with:

- The expertise of a global broadcaster and video production partner, but at affordable rates, with the ability to react fast without compromising on the quality.
- A team of experienced, friendly and knowledgeable production staff to support you in developing your video production strategy or video brief
- An award winning digital team to help build your platforms and audiences
- End-to-end production from creative concepts to delivery on any scale, anywhere in the world
- Specialist video brand management and development services

ITN Productions offers free consultations to those considering using video for B2B marketing.

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