5 Fixes for Your Online Video Marketing Strategy: Lessons From Google BrandLab

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People are notorious resolution breakers, but it isn't for lack of trying. And guess what? Marketers are no different. Kim Larson, global director of Google BrandLab, shares tips for how brand marketers working in online video can better define, share, and positively crush their goals in 2017.

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D id you know that about 40% of Americans usually make New Year's resolutions, but only about 8% of the country actually achieves them? As January progresses, many of us are trying to avoid becoming part of that 92% cohort.

Sadly, our 9-out-of-10 failure rate is the gift that keeps on giving. Check out the graph below on search traffic related to "resolutions" every January for the last five years. Those searches get results too; I returned almost 50 million of them when searching "New Year's Resolutions 2017."

Searches for "Resolutions," Jan. 2012–Jan. 2016

Searches for "Resolutions"

Jan. 8, 2012   July 7, 2013   Jan. 4, 2015   July 8, 2016

As I tried to ensure I wasn't part of that 92% failure rate, I spent some time thinking about what it takes to keep not just our personal resolutions, but also our professional resolutions on track. As the global head of Google BrandLab, I spend every day working with brands on their online video strategies. These five themes can help you build and, more importantly, sustain successful New Year's resolutions, whether personal or professional.

#1: Measure progress with the right metric

Body weight. Body mass index. Body fat percentage. There's a whole body of metrics we use to measure our bodies. It's strange to me, then, when marketers measure their body of work in online video based on just one metric: views.

Views may be the proverbial public scorecard, but they're not always the best way to track progress against a brand's unique goals. Last year, we broke out how your brand goal (e.g., awareness or consideration) can help you land on a more relevant metric or KPI than just "views":

Measuring Brand Marketing Goals With KPIs

BRAND MARKETING GOALS	Awareness	Consideration	Action
KPIs TO MEASURE THAT GOAL	Views	View-through rate	Clicks
	Impressions	Watch time	Calls
	Unique users	Favorability lift	Sign-ups
	Awareness lift	Consideration lift	Sales
	Ad recall lift	Brand interest lift	Purchase intent lift

According to this Forbes article on New Year's resolutions, "If you can measure it, you can change it." The beauty of online video is that, unlike with television, we actually can measure all of these different metrics in real time. Once you've used the chart above to land on the right metric or KPI, use the chart below to pick the right tool to measure it—because only when you measure it can you change it.

Tools for Measuring KPIs	👁 Awareness KPIs	💬 Consideration KPIs	Action KPIs
YOUTUBE ANALYTICS GOOGLE ANALYTICS ADWORDS	Views Impressions Unique users	View-through rate Watch time	Clicks Calls Sign-ups Sales
BRAND LIFT	Awareness lift Ad recall lift	Favorability lift Consideration lift Brand interest lift	Purchase intent lift
GOOGLE CONSUMER SURVEYS	Answers to custom questions		

#2: Start with short-term solutions

If your resolution is to run seven miles without stopping, but right now you can barely run seven blocks, your first goal out of the gate isn't a seven-minute mile. Instead, successful resolutions start with realistic, short-term goals and solutions. First, you walk a mile. Then you run a mile, then two, and so on.

And yet I meet countless brand advertisers who think they've failed if they haven't created the next Old Spice Guy. Instead of this "all or nothing" philosophy, start with a short-term solution. Consider using your existing TV ads on YouTube: Many of the top YouTube ads on the 2016 Year-End YouTube Ads Leaderboard are also TV ads. Then, when you're ready to build more of a YouTube-centric content strategy, check out our very first Lesson from Google BrandLab on that topic.

#3: Pick a long-term trend—not a fad

January is peak season for unsustainable diet trends and fitness fads. We've all tried one. You see incredible results for a week or two and then suddenly you've fallen off the wagon. This year, I used a simple filter as I considered health trends: the test of time. The trend that will actually support your resolution is the one that's been around for years.

Online video is no different. The best investment may not be the hottest trend, but the longest one. Rather than trying to capture lightning in a bottle, a lot of brands stand to benefit by embracing ongoing trends on YouTube. For example, instead of hurrying to make a "running man challenge" video at exactly the right moment, a brand might capitalize on the evergreen trend of "how to dance" videos.

How on earth do you distinguish an ongoing trend from a flash in the pan? Google Trends can help. Here's what happens when you compare the relative YouTube search interest of "Running Man challenge" against "how to dance" in the last 12 months. Note the sustained interest in dance videos, versus the spike-and-dive performance of the "Running Man":
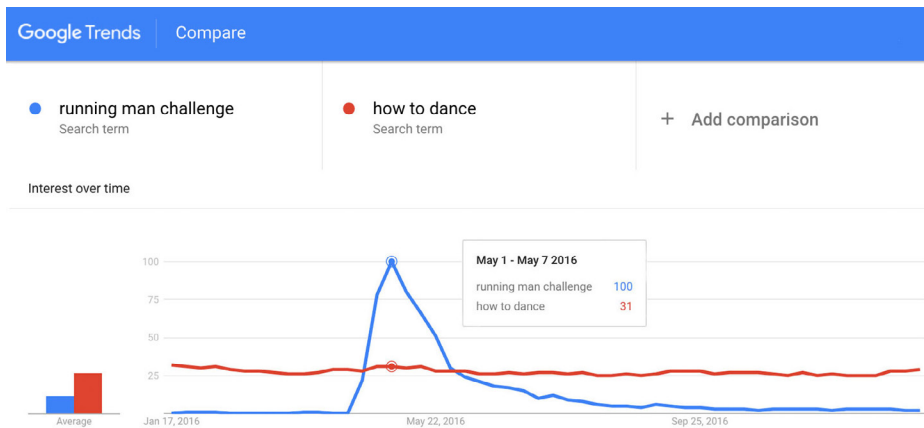
#4: Be realistic about how much time you (and your consumers) have

In my resolutions research, one tip I ran into again and again was to schedule regular "appointments" to accomplish your resolutions. If you resolve to reduce clutter but never have an afternoon to tackle the garage, set aside 10 minutes every morning before you get in the car to put something away. If we don't change how we do things, how can we expect to get those things done?

Just like us, our consumers have limited time. When it comes to video, sometimes they're in a rush. In consumers' shorter video sessions, we've seen short ads—like YouTube's six-second bumper ads—often work best. Later in the day, if they're binging on Carpool Karaoke at home for an hour, they might be more receptive to something longer, like a 30-second TrueView ad.

Online video uniquely offers advertisers the opportunity to respect consumers' time and match ad length to consumer attention. In a world where two-thirds of people aren't paying attention to TV ads, we have to change how we ask consumers to watch. Otherwise, how can we expect them to watch at all?

#5: Celebrate meaningful milestones

Many of us are using wearables, like smartwatches, to help us achieve our New Year's resolutions. There's a reason these devices don't reward us for how long we've owned them, but for how far we've walked. One result is brand-centric, the other is user-centric: Consumers want to celebrate milestones that make them look good, not milestones that make brands look good.

Too often, brands base major milestones on themselves, not their consumers. At the BrandLab, when we ask brand teams for calendars, we typically get a list of product and campaign launches. That's not

meaningful for consumers. When you think about your calendar year, plan to the consumer moments rather than to your own launches.

Take Budweiser. They knew the World Series had the potential to be a huge moment for Cubs fans, so they devised a way to stand out in an unbelievably crowded media landscape. By releasing an ad that helped Cubs fans celebrate in real time, Budweiser added meaning to an already meaningful moment. The moment was bigger than them, so Budweiser made an ad that was bigger than them too.

Budweiser | Chicago Cubs 2016 World Series Champions | Harry Caray's Last Call | Fly The W

It may be true that 92% of Americans break their New Year's resolutions, but I think our real failure is not understanding why. As we head deeper into January, maybe you've fallen down on one of your resolutions. But rather than beating yourself up or avoiding the topic altogether, try reflecting on how you could've set more realistic, achievable goals.

This is my final learning for brands: As we all race to get onto the next product launch or campaign, the art of the "tear down" has gotten a bit lost. Embrace the end of a campaign for the opportunity it presents for reflection. Whether it was a success or failure, don't move on to the next launch until you've determined what went right or wrong. Remember that old chestnut: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." In 2017, resolve to spend enough time remembering failure that you set yourself up for success.