

Show 'em What You Got: 7 Tools to Break Into Visual Marketing

Not too long ago, experts predicted that the online marketing space would be too competitive for run-of-the-mill content. Think about it for a second. With millions of blog posts being published per day, do you think a small brand stands a chance to steal the online audience's attention from industry leaders? Probably not – if they keep spewing out generic, bland, text-based content.

Remember that the online marketing space is like a war zone. If you want to win against your competition, you can't afford to lag behind them in terms of skill and technology. And in the past few years, *visual content* has been keeping small businesses afloat in an ocean dominated by relentless, big-name brands.

It's not rocket science. Apart from grabbing the audience's attention, high-quality visuals can also aid information retention, improve the engagement factor, and lead to more shares on social media. More importantly, visual content is now easy and cheap to create – thanks to the availability of cloud-based tools and platforms.

Related: 9 Must-Have Visual-Marketing Tools on the Web

Here are some of the best ones you should consider:

1. Promo by Slidely.

Launched last summer by Slidely, the company behind some of Facebook's most popular image collection tools, Promo takes all of the hassle out of the process of creating short video

clips for businesses to share on social media.

All you need is a concept, a few lines of text and a logo. The web app takes care of the rest, thanks to its rich libraries of HD footage from Getty, rights-cleared background music and easy creation tools. Promo fast, versatile and effective.

2. Jing.

A lot of content marketers are familiar with the struggle of relaying technical instructions via tutorial posts. That's why you need a screen capture tool like Jing, which makes everything from annotations to video recordings much simpler.

Once installed and launched, Jing's features will be accessible from an on-screen, "quick access" menu. This means you can easily take advantage of its three-step capture process without having to switch applications.

3. Clickmeeting.

As a marketer, you must've watched countless webinars to improve your skills. There's also a good chance that you've been following the people who created those webinars as you grew in the field. That's because webinars have successfully built their authority and trustworthiness in your eyes. And with a platform like Clickmeeting, it won't take much for you to do the same.

Clickmeeting is equipped with everything you'll ever need to launch a successful webinar series. It can help you design attractive invitations, create intuitive registration pages, and run your webinar with a whole slew of interaction tools – from screen sharing to live polls.

From a marketing standpoint, offering webinars is a great way to generate and nurture leads. Clickmeeting, in particular, also offers solutions that are tailored to specific business

goals – be it for sales or marketing.

4. Shoppable Instagram.

Although updates to Instagram's algorithm have made it a bit harder for marketers to reach audience members organically, this is still the social platform best suited for sharing visuals. And the engagement rates here are still tops, with RivalIQ estimating that for every 1000 people who see the average brand post, nearly 1.7 of them will interact with the post in some way.

Instagram rolled out “shoppable” posts to all qualifying accounts last month, making it easier than ever to monetize visual marketing assets by using them to drive sales of consumer goods. Using a tool like Photoslurp, you easily can find all of the images of your products that your fans have posted. Once you've got their permission, you can “re-gram” these images, adding the authenticity of user-generated content to your feed.

Related: #5 Ways to Fuel Your Content Marketing with User-generated Content

Then you just need to sync your Instagram account with a leading multichannel ecommerce platform like BigCommerce, for example, and you're ready to start selling.

5. SlideShare.

If you think your brand is not yet ready for video content, then you can scale it back down to only slideshow presentations. SlideShare is the go-to slideshow platform that can help you. Its main selling point is its direct integration with LinkedIn, which makes it easier for you to connect with B2B leads.

Looking at SlideShare's features, it's also not that far-

fetches to consider it as its own social media network. Users can leave comments, like, share content, and follow other users within a few clicks – just like other popular image-sharing sites.

6. Sumo sharing plugins.

Adding images to blog posts can significantly boost their shareability on social media. To maximize this advantage, make sure it's actually easy for your audience to share them.

Sumo, a suite of marketing automation tools, can help you in two ways. You can utilize their plug-and-play social sharing buttons, or you can integrate the “Image Sharer” plugin to help spread your visual content.

The social sharing buttons work via a floating sidebar that doesn't impede the user's content consumption. On the other hand, the Image Sharer plugin works by showing the buttons only if the mouse pointer is hovering over an image. Either way, Sumo has provided a solution that makes social sharing an improvement to the overall user experience.

7. Buffer.

Instagram is unquestionably the biggest image-sharing site on the planet. They have figured out the perfect formula that turns visual content into a branding machine. However, you need to know the best posting times on social media if you want to maximize the visibility of your posts.

For this, you can use a social media automation tool like Buffer, which lets you create a regular posting schedule. In addition to Instagram, you can also use Buffer to automate posts on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Google+ and LinkedIn.

Related: There Is a Best Time to Publish on Social Media and You Can Determine When It Is

No amount of software can replace a marketer's aptitude for generating demand when there is none. With the tools above, you should be more than ready to take on bigger competitors. Just remember that there's no such thing as a one-size-fits-all solution for anything. If a tool offers a free trial, then by all means take it for a spin – you never know if it perfectly matches your needs until you test it yourself.

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