

YOUTUBE FINDABILITY: GO VIRAL OR NOT!



Heather Lutze has spent the last 10 years helping business owners get their enterprises noticed on the Web by their target audiences. She is the author of "The Findability Formula: The Easy, Non-Technical Approach to Search Engine Marketing." Visit FindabilityFormula.com for tools and resources to increase your site's findability.

Recently, when researching YouTube videos for a presentation I was pulling together on Social Media findability, I was appalled at the number of embarrassingly bad videos that companies had uploaded to their channels.

One, about home construction, was set to the tune of Enrique Iglesias' "I like it" while it played a slide show of showers, decks and home siding. Then the video ended with a blatant endorsement for the Web designer who created the video. I asked myself, could this video be any worse?

For most businesses, it seems the goal for online video is to "go viral" — two million views results in two million new customers, right?

Wrong.

Although going viral can be one strategy for your business, it is not a requirement for an effective YouTube business strategy.

Problem:

We are a professional company. How do we create videos to uphold our brand in YouTube search and acquire real business leads?

Action Plan:

- 1) YouTube is a Search Engine. Treat It As One!
- 2) Optimize the Key Elements of a Video for Findability
- 3) Measure Key Indicators of Success in YouTube

YouTube is a Search Engine. Treat It As One!

When you think about the big search engines, what comes to mind? Google, Yahoo!, Bing, maybe even Ask.com? You might be surprised to learn, as of December 2009, comScore's U.S. Search Ranking report showed that YouTube gets more searches each month than Yahoo! or Bing. That represents more than 3.9 billion searches in 2009 — 50 percent more than Yahoo! and 180 percent more than Bing.

It's time to stop thinking about the value of YouTube as simply a video sharing site that your less-productive employees are watching, and start treating it like a major search engine in your Internet marketing strategy.

Think of every video you create as you would a page on your website — each one will rank and can be found by millions of YouTube searchers.

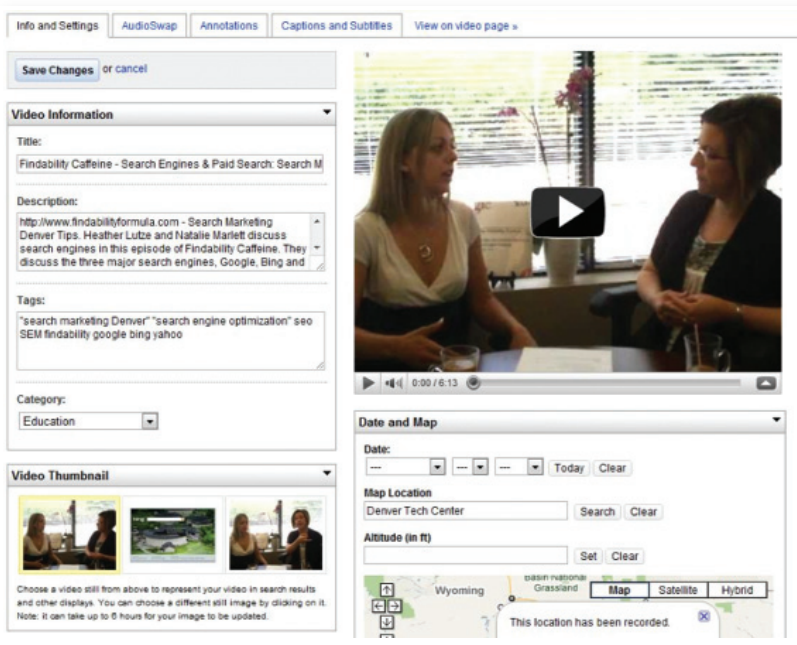
Every single video you produce and upload to your YouTube channel should be titled with valuable and highly searched keyword phrases. That's right — you need to treat your YouTube content just like any other content. You don't need to have baboons juggling bananas — just create great content that your target audience will find interesting, optimize it with keywords for which your target audience is searching and you have the ability to uphold your brand and gain business from YouTube.

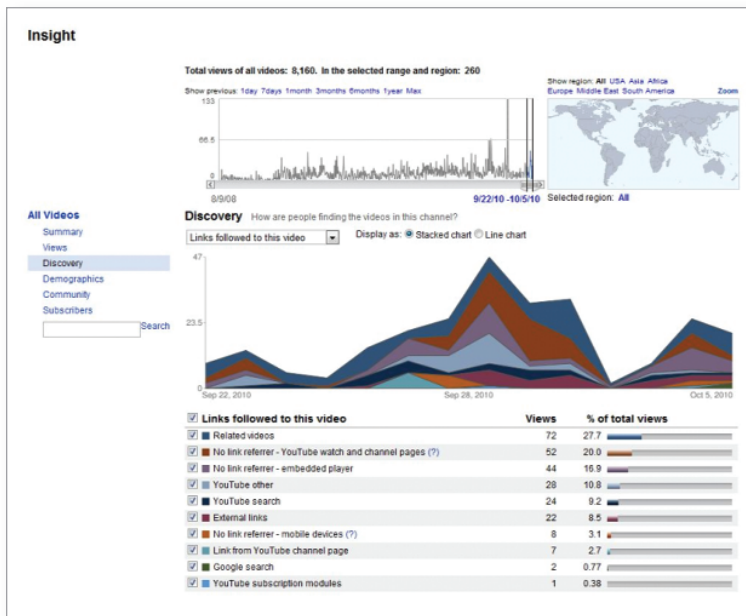
Of course, optimizing a YouTube Video is a little different than a Web page, so here is an easy, three-step strategy to optimize your YouTube videos.

Optimize the Key Element of Every Video for Findability

- 1) Use a Keyword in the Title: Research your keywords. Use a keyword that is highly searched as part of your naming convention of the video title. The Google Keyword Tool is free and an excellent option for researching keyword phrase options, found here: <http://wsm.co/bREOyp>

Each YouTube video can be optimized with descriptive titles, descriptions, tags, categories, locations and more. Optimize every video with valuable and highly-searched keywords for the best chances of being found by your target audience. All of these options are available under "My Videos" when logged into your YouTube account.





YouTube Insight is a free tool that provides invaluable analytical data about your videos to help track and ultimately determine the level of success you are achieving.

Don't Sleep on Video Search!

Video search results are hardly limited to YouTube. More and more, online video is appearing naturally in search results on every major search engine results page. Optimizing your video is not only important for a YouTube search but also critical to everyday SEO.

2) **Optimize and Create an Effective Description:** Make sure your URL, call-to-action or phone number is included in the beginning of the first sentence in your description — look at other YouTube videos and their descriptions to get an idea of how much text will be seen by the viewer. Sprinkle keywords throughout your description for better findability with YouTube search.

3) **Don't Ignore the Keyword Tags:** Go to the search box in YouTube and you will get auto-complete suggested searches based on a particular keyword. For example, "Search Engine Marketing" suggestions include search engine marketing training, class, help, education and more. These alternatives can be used as tags for your video, as well as for your future video plans and ideas. Even more options are possible with YouTube's advanced search, which you can find here: <http://wsm.co/cqnlia>

4) **Make use of Annotations:** Make sure to use annotations to notify users when a video has a more updated version, to link them to a page on your website or blog, or any other call-to-action important to your business initiatives. Learn more about annotations here: <http://wsm.co/c6pz20>

Key Indicators of Success in YouTube

Of course, it's important to be able to identify what keywords and video content is working. Here are a few metrics you can follow in order to measure your YouTube success meaningfully.

- Increase in subscribers to your channel over time
- Number of total views
- Presence and positioning of your videos when searching targeted keywords in YouTube search
- Comments on videos
- YouTube Insight: <http://wsm.co/aLJGUv>
- Track and get detailed information on your videos and viewer behavior

Make sure that every ounce of effort you put into your YouTube channel pays off with views, calls-to-action and real life business. Your efforts to produce videos must pay off by getting in front of a

searching audience that will convert. With every video, do your homework and find out how the searcher wants to find that content — you will get the visitors and customers you want. For more tips on YouTube findability, visit my YouTube channel at <http://www.Youtube.com/HLutze>.

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