

Retail Furniture Store

NEW MEDIA MARKETING

Part 2: Explode Your Sales Easily With A Furniture TV Show on the Internet.

Furniture Marketing by Mike Root

There is a new media solution that home furnishings retailers can use to tell their story to a buying public hungry for information. It addresses the needs of the furniture industry, by allowing stores to effectively show off the beauty, elegance and value of furniture like no other media tool.

What I am referring to is the use of online video in the form of a Web TV show. Throughout this article I will give you examples of shows, and additional resources if you want to explore this topic further. Specifically I will share with you the following:

- What is a Web TV show?
- Web TV show trends.
- Can You Create a Web TV show?

- Reasons why you should consider a Web TV show.
- 8 Steps to Launch Your Own Web TV show.

WHAT IS A WEB TV SHOW?

A Web TV show is a video show that has a serial storyline and appears only on the Internet. A Web TV show is a lot like a TV sitcom or regular series where viewers get in a pattern of watching at a specific time.

WEB TV SHOW TRENDS

Streaming video sites such as Hulu and Netflix already host existing content that allows viewers to watch movies and TV shows created by mainstream content providers. But there is a new big com-

petitor looming on the horizon that could make it possible for independent furniture stores to get their message out via video much easier.

The April 7, 2011 Wall Street Journal edition reported that, "Google's YouTube website is working on a major site overhaul to organize its content around

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'channels' as it positions itself for the rise of Internet-connected televisions." YouTube will in effect become a competitor for traditional broadcast and cable TV. These new channels will be designed around categories such as sports, fashion, home, etc. The channels will carry professionally produced content to combine with content people upload on their own.

These new Web TV networks will be organized portals attracting the millions of people who currently watch online



IKEA's WebTV show doesn't provide any information on furnishing rooms or homes. It has no call to action, offers, deadlines or featured products. Professionally written scripts feature actors (called co-workers) such as Illeana Douglas, Justine Bateman, Jeff Goldblum and Tim Meadows in yellow IKEA shirts. It is a web sitcom that encourages viewer participation by asking consumers to vote for their favorite "co-workers" and buy items such as mugs, shirts and intimate apparel. This is not the kind of show that most furniture retailers can or should produce. See it at www.easytoassembleseries.com.



“Check out Gary Vaynerchuk’s Wine Library TV. Gary has grown his family retail business, made himself a celebrity, bestselling author and speaker.”

video. According to the Journal, “YouTube executives say they want people to ‘watch YouTube’ the same way they ‘watch TV’”. As the sites grow in influence they hope to attract more of the approximately 70 billion dollars of US advertising spent on traditional broadcast TV.

In the not too distant future furniture retailers will be able to buy ad space on a Google home decorating channel instead of a spot on the 5 o’clock news. And more powerful options will emerge, such as the opportunity to produce and air more in-depth video Web TV shows as the new online-only networks look for good local content.

CAN YOU CREATE A WEB TV SHOW?

Back in the early 1990’s as a retailer, I spent a majority of my advertising dollars on television advertising. A buddy of mine who worked at a production house visited the store twice each month to cut TV spots. We did traditional sales events, but it was exceptionally difficult to get the message across in a 30 second spot.

At one point, we experimented with broadcasting a deal a day that featured just one item. We quickly found out that this concept was not cost effective from a production or audience response point of view. The problem was that by the time potential customers saw our spot and responded, the special for the day was over.

Oh how times have changed! New equipment makes it incredibly inexpensive to shoot video. Web TV shows are easy to produce and free to host on

Google’s YouTube. If you want to do a “deal of the day” video you can get it done at virtually no cost other than the time spent to plan, create and post the video. Yes, you can use high production values to start, but most retailers first experiment with inexpensively produced shows, learn as they go, and add to the budget and production value as viewership increases.

Check out Gary Vaynerchuk’s Wine Library TV. Gary has grown his family’s New Jersey based retail wine business by millions of dollars, made himself a celebrity, bestselling author and speaker, all because of his Web TV show. He started Wine Library TV five years ago and recently eclipsed the 1,000 show mark. You can watch his show at www.WineLibrary.tv.

Gary is a vibrant personality who is passionate about his product – wine. He built his business using new age media streams and in the process changed the way the wine industry operates. He’s constantly using Twitter, Facebook and of course, Wine Library TV which really paved the way for him. Each installment of WineLibrary.tv features a couple of wines. Gary tests them and gives his audience an honest review, rating each one and telling his viewers if he likes it, and (more importantly) if it is a good value and worth purchasing.

When you go to his site, take a look at his first shows and compare them to later ones. You will see he has really grown the quality from the early days, but he didn’t wait to get it all figured out, he just got started. Now Gary has launched a daily show called Daily Grape at

www.dailygrape.com. He’s outgrown the Wine Library TV, but I think that it is instructive to see how this wine guru started his journey.

Our industry is ripe for a Gary Vaynerchuk of the furniture industry. Will it be you?

THREE REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD CONSIDER A SHOW

A Web TV show will give customers real reasons to buy from you: A regularly scheduled Web TV show will make it easy for you to communicate decorating tips, introductions, new service offerings, and best sellers. Just by showing new products in an informative or entertaining fashion, retail consumers will get ideas for rooms they should be updating with new home furnishings. After seeing your show, your store will be the place they think to go with their home furnishings needs.

It will help you to build relationships and retain customers: People buy from people they know, like, and trust. Every time you launch a new episode of your Web TV show you cultivate and strengthen relationships with customers and prospects.

You can become a leading authority or celebrity in the furniture world: Gary Vaynerchuk is a perfect example of a celebrity in his niche. Gary’s show is effective because it is unscripted so the viewer gets to really know him and his personality. He also comes across as knowledgeable and honest. These features instill the know, like and trust factor



Charlie McDermott of StandOut TV (www.Standout.TV) is in the business of putting people into WebTV Shows. Also check out... Mike Capuzzi - <http://www.mikecapuzzi.tv> – who gives three valuable resource tips in three minutes. Bite size marketing tips Andrew Locke – www.helpmybusiness.com another resource for small business marketing and video training advice. Adam Witty – www.authoradvantage.tv – this is not as visually interesting as others because it is mainly a talking head. However, it would be a good model for someone to take a look at to see how to start a show. Keep in mind he is talking to a very specific niche (authors) and is more B2B.



“Charlie has an excellent course. He agreed to make this available to anyone reading this article. You can get the details at FurnitureMarketing.TV.”

which ultimately leads to credibility. Credibility is what distinguishes one retail store from another. Gary sells wine to people who could easily purchase the same wine from a local store. I’m sure

many still do. And even though his sales have increased from \$4 million to \$60 million in 5 years, his Web TV show is about more than just grabbing immediate sales. It builds his credibility and brand.

Get your show going before the competition does: There is a market out there for any niche—whether it be wine, home furnishings or anything else that people are passionate about and are willing to spend some money on. You can use your web TV show to suc-

cessfully share your knowledge and personal experiences with product and humor -- but only if you get started now before others jump in.

PLAN THE STRUCTURE OF YOUR WEB TV SHOW

My good friend Charlie McDermott of StandOut TV (www.Standout.tv) is in the business of putting people into WebTV Shows. I turned to him when I started my own Web TV show. Charlie gave me permission to share the following tips with you on how to structure a TV show:

Step #1 - Your Show’s Concept: In order to develop a successful show you want to ask yourself a number of questions:

- What is the purpose of the show?
- Who is the target audience?
- How can you help your audience?
- How will you keep them coming back for future episodes

Step #2 - Your Show’s Name: Depending on the direction of your show will determine how you name it.

You can use your brand if you have a well known name. A perfect example of this is the excellent work Jack Wells is doing for this magazine at www.FurnitureWorldTV. He has taken the Furniture World Magazine brand and extended it online. That’s a very smart strategy for both the magazine and for the video production talents of Jack Wells.

Most of us do not have a domain

name that is keyword based for Google search engines. You might, however, consider incorporating some keywords into your show name so customers doing internet searches will find you. Though these are not TV shows, think along the lines of www.furniture-sales.com and www.furniture-sale.com. It is a sure way to get found by prospects on the Internet when they are looking for furniture purchases.

A third way to name your show is by making it "action based". This is a name that tells the prospective customers what to expect. My son Jay and I have a show that helps retailers with marketing ideas. We call it, "Get Customers TV" (www.GetCustomers.TV). We hope that our site's name tells prospects that we

can help retailers "get customers", without any further explanation.

"A web TV show should reside on its own website for several reasons."

Step 3 - Purchase the Show's URL/ Domain Name: Do this like you would any other furniture domain through an internet provider such as Network Solutions (www.networksolutions.com).

Step 4 - Have a Branded Opening: This is a graphic start that helps tell your story in the first 10-15 seconds. It should be consistent from week to week and distinguish your program as a Web TV show versus just another web video.

Step 5 - TV Show Website Design: A web TV show should reside on its own website for several reasons. First, you want to make a point of your entertaining and informative show from your commercial website that is all about selling products. Customers will be more receptive if they don't think they are going to get sold.

Second, Google loves video on websites and this is an additional way to get a site ranked high in search engines. Then you just provide links back and forth



More web marketing tips and Web TV shows can be found on www.getcustomers.tv. The Web TV show features Mike Root, his self described "better looking half" Jay and Huey "the marketing wonder dog". Furniture World magazine's new video site FurnitureWorld.TV produced by Jack Wells has high production value, and includes interviews, furniture showroom tours and industry news. Both are B to B sites.



between the two sites and you have extra listings on Google to capture customers' attention when they search. I recommend that you set your site in Wordpress (www.wordpress.org), an open source software product that creates search engine friendly websites. Wordpress started as just a blogging system, but has evolved to be used as a full content management system with thousands of plugins, widgets, and themes.

Step 6 - Creating Content: There are all kinds of things you can talk about on your show depending on your target audience and what you want to be known for. Here are some ideas to get started:

- Keep it short and sweet. YouTube videos are between 2-3 minutes. If you must go longer, break your show up into segments and try not to exceed 2-3 minutes per segment.
- Show as much product as you can, but present it in a way that you are not selling it. Viewers will get turned off if they think see one big pitch fest.
- Talk about decorating tips to help the prospect visualize the better life they will have with new home furnishings.
- Avoid talking heads if possible. People will be turned off if they just see you on camera reading a script.

- Invite guest experts to appear on your show. When the factory rep shows up have him give a short sales presentation of his product and incorporate it into the show. That could be a weekly feature with different reps each show.
- Do a Question and Answer format to answer the most frequently asked questions. By peeling away the curtain you can become the trusted expert.

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Step 7 - Filming and Editing: This can vary widely with regard to cost and complexity. I will tell you that our show "Get Customers TV" is shot with a \$129 Kodak zi8 video camera and is edited on a Mac computer. Furniture World TV is done by a professional videographer, Jack Wells. Depending on your circumstances, you will probably fall somewhere in

between. Here are a couple of brief tips to help make your show successful in the early production days (in other words, you can learn from my mistakes).

- Keep it entertaining. They won't come back if they are bored or you are too long winded.
- The sound quality of the video is more important than the visual.
- Use a teleprompter (free software for your computer can be found online at www.movieclip.biz/prompt.html).

Step 8: Launch Your Show:

- Upload your show to YouTube and Embed the code onto your website.
- Send out an email to your list announcing your latest show.
- Let your social media tribe know about it through Twitter, Facebook et al.
- Watch your show go viral.
- Encourage viewers to leave comments.

To briefly summarize, Web TV is a growing phenomenon. It allows customers and prospects to watch what they want when they want, and where they want to watch it. You will be able to use it to build a community of followers and ultimately, if done right, become an authority in your niche.

Offer: If you would like more specific information on how to use the power of Web TV shows to grow your business, Charlie McDermott of Standout TV has an excellent course. Charlie agreed to make his course available to anyone reading this article. You can get the details at www.FurnitureMarketing.TV.

WEB TV MARKETING

I would love to hear from you if you decide to start your own Web TV show or know of some really good examples we can feature in future Furniture World articles. Drop me an email at mroot@furninfo.com.

Mike Root is Founder of Get Customers Right Now, a marketing company that provides online marketing systems, promotional campaigns, and premium incentive ideas. His techniques are designed to help retailers build sales through the use of low cost and no cost direct response marketing strategies. Visit his website GetCustomersRightNow.com to get a free

resource for furniture retailers entitled "7 Little Known Customer Acquisition Strategies You Can Quickly Implement To Get New Customers And Explode Your Income That Your Competition Hopes You Never Discover."

Mike and his son, Jay along with Huey the Marketing Dog also host a free WebTV show called Get Customers TV (www.GetCustomers.TV) that spotlights the best of the best customer acquisition strategies for retailers. The show features helpful tips and tricks furniture retailers can use to spend less money on marketing while attracting more new prospects.

Mike also is President of Furniture Sales of Mid-America, a furniture wholesale and rep company in the Midwest and Rocky

Mountain states. He serves on the Executive Committee of the IHFRA and is a third generation furniture guy with experience in retail, wholesale and rental. He was recognized by the SBA as an Entrepreneur of the Year, and his furniture retail stores were honored by the Omaha Chamber of Commerce as one of the Top 25 Fastest Growing Enterprises three years in a row. He has been recognized by national furniture factories for sales excellence more than 15 times.

Free articles, blogs and instructional videos can be found at www.MikeRoot.com. Questions about this article or any advertising or marketing topic can be directed to him care of Furniture World at mroot@furninfo.com.