



# “Show, Don't Tell” with Video

By Demming Bass



**W**e all know it's true—the attention span of most target audiences has been reduced to 30 seconds, thanks to TV commercials. You must inform and entertain—or “info-tain”—creatively and quickly or your message will be glossed over. Even if you're just promoting a free chamber event, if the message isn't eye- and ear-catching, it will be lost among the minutia.

Traditional communication vehicles like print, radio and even television are declining in their success rates. The competition for your target's attention has multiplied. The overload of information and messaging that your target experiences on a daily basis is staggering.

## GET WITH THE TIMES

To be a successful chamber in the New Millennium, it's critical to produce a message that will cut through the clutter to deliver your message. And that's where video comes into play.

“Chambers—or any company—should consider using video over traditional communication methods,” says Rob

Mottola, general manager of Duluth, GA–based NightGlass Media Group, the company that produced ACCE's 2005 Grand Award-winning video for the **Gwinnett (GA) Chamber of Commerce**. “Our experience over the last three years is that video has become *the* medium for reaching people in our society. Technology and communications have flattened our world, and we need to keep up with the trends.”

If your Chamber's sole marketing efforts are brochures only, you need to quickly rethink your business plan. **The Greater Des Moines (IA) Partnership** and **Newnan-Coweta (GA) Chamber** have done just that.

In today's digital age, many communities are turning to video to promote their communities in ways they may never have tried before. The Greater Des Moines Partnership produces several videos a year for various purposes and recently worked with a production company to produce and distribute virally three videos to attract attention to the Central Iowa job market.

According to **Susan Ramsey**, the Partnership's **senior vice president of communications and marketing**, the videos were intended to be entertaining so that people would share them electronically with their friends and colleagues, but also carry important messaging about quality of life, job availability and community image.

The creative videos were posted on the Partnership's website and YouTube, a popular and free video-sharing service,

as well as on the local newspaper's site and on several other strategic sites. The organization also emailed its major employers' human resource professionals with links to the videos to help spread them to prospective employees.

Video can also be used to spice up a traditional chamber event in a refreshing and unexpected way. The Newnan-Coweta (GA) Chamber created a video for its annual meeting, themed *Mission Possible*. It launched its new mission statement as a part of the program, and the video dovetailed nicely into the overall presentation. Featuring the Chamber's chairman, vice chairmen, and president talking about their respective roles and goals, the video is now copied to CDs and given to new members.

#### NOW FOR THE REAL QUESTIONS: HOW MUCH COMMITMENT AND COST?

Ok, videos sound great, but the one thing most (over-worked) chamber executives want to know is, how much work is involved?

"Since we outsourced those particular videos, much of our work was administrative and oversight," says Ramsey. "Each project (running concurrently) took approximately eight weeks to complete, from RFP to final approval and dubs. Our marketing staff approved all scripts and treatments to assure our messaging remained on target, and attended the majority of the tapings, but gave a great deal of creative freedom to the producers. During those eight weeks, staff time involved was no more than 40 hours."

**Newnan-Coweta Chamber President Candace LaForge** agrees. "It wasn't much work at all. The real work was on the video guys."

Of course, the second question most (underpaid) chamber executives ask is, how much does it cost?

Each of Des Moines' videos cost about \$3,500 to produce, but the results have been impressive. In three months, the organization has been able to track over 1,800 views of the videos, which more than tripled the exposure it received in

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the past over the same time span from mailing relocation packets with a CD. Visitors who went to the Partnership's website also received exposure to additional messaging.

Smaller chambers with smaller budgets can still get high-quality video by trading out a membership and paying the balance. For the Newnan-Coweta chamber, this method resulted in a video that cost only \$700.

No matter the cost or time involved, both Ramsey and LaForge recommend video as a tool for chambers as it becomes more affordable through advances in technology.

#### VIDEO TO GO

With recent advancements in technology, chambers can produce and distribute video and media to go—through mobile phones. The most popular application you've probably heard of is V-Cast through Verizon.

Popular examples of video applications for organizations today are sales and training videos. For example, Nightglass Media Group divided a three-hour training seminar into shorter 20-minute segments for one company. Those 20-minute segments were converted into digital files available for sale via download only off of a special media website the firm designed. This strategy enables sales people on the go to make use of down-time, including air travel or hotel stays.

But this application could be the wave of the future for chambers that can record and sell seminar and educational content that historically make up much of their small business programs of work.

To see Nightglass' finished product, visit [www.absflightops.com/store/products](http://www.absflightops.com/store/products).

"People love to see videos and animated images rather than just hearing about progress or programs," says LaForge. "Plus, a well designed communications program would appeal to different learning styles—audio, visual, tactile, etc.—so it pays to use a variety of tools or vehicles to reach the audience."

"My advice to a Chamber producing a video today—use a local provider who will have the same community ownership you do, try not to accomplish everything in one



piece, and above all keep it short," says Ramsey. "Society's attention span isn't what it used to be."

How true. ☑

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