

How Retailers Can Make Video Efforts More Effective

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More videos, more visible

Adding online video to ecommerce sites is a way for retailers to provide a better look at products, an explanation of how they work and other information that helps online shoppers make a better purchase decision.

Research shows video increases conversion on retail sites, and even decreases the number of items returned. And it's one of the fastest-growing content types for online merchants.

According to the retailing group's 13th Annual Mystery Shopping Study, usage of online video on product pages among the 100 leading retailers studied increased by 18 percentage points between Q4 2009 and Q4 2010.

That was the biggest increase of any feature studied, but retailers still have a lot of work when it comes to integrating online video throughout their sites.

Craig Wax, CEO of Invodo, which creates videos for retailers and provides a platform for distributing them, told eMarketer in January that despite rapid uptake, "Retailers are still miles away from saturation, because even when they have videos on their sites they are not being created at scale. At this point there are only really a couple of retailers that have thousands of videos."

That is supported by research from SundaySky, which provides a platform to mass-generate video content based on website content. The firm automatically and manually studied the websites of the top 50 retailers in the Internet Retailer 500 list and found that typically, sites had relatively few videos.

Three in five of the top retailers had fewer than 100 videos, and most of those had under 10.

The most common type of videos offered by retailers were clips about products; nearly three-quarters of the sites studied had product-specific videos.

In addition to improving transaction rates, video can be a major boost for search engine optimization efforts, as sites and pages with video rank higher.

But SundaySky found that many retailers were missing out on these benefits by embedding videos in suboptimal ways, such as pop-up windows.

Nearly half of the retailers studied had no videos at all indexed by Google, and about a quarter had up to 10 indexed.

As videos continue to gain importance for ecommerce, retailers should consider how scalable their efforts are and be sure to take advantage of the benefits video can provide for SEO.

Platforms that allow sharing of retail videos will move clips beyond the retailer's site and increase opportunities for social shopping.

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