ULTIMATE GUIDE

HOW TO CREATE THE PERFECT EXPLAINER VIDEO

wyzowl
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INTRODUCTION

If you’re new to video marketing, or even if you’ve been using this strategy for a while, this guide will tell you everything you need to know about creating the Perfect Explainer video.

Throughout this ebook, each individual step required to make an amazing explainer video for your brand, from planning all the way to promotion, will be broken down. By honing in on the most minute details, this ebook will act as an an Ultimate Guide for any video marketer.
Explainer videos are short, online marketing videos for businesses. They are typically around one to two minutes in length and used to explain start-up businesses, and/or new products or services.

**How can an Explainer Video help your business?**

Video marketing has proven to be very popular among marketers these days with 68% of marketers strongly agreeing that explainer videos are essential for their business, and over half (53%) saying that videos are something their customers expect from them.

An explainer video can help your business in many ways. It can encourage customers to purchase from you by instilling trust in your company, and creating an understanding of your product or service. In fact, in a recent Wyzowl survey, 73% of people said that they bought from a company after watching one of their videos. That’s a huge percentage of people that perhaps would not have become customers without an effective explainer video.

Due to the fact that explainer videos give a greater understanding of your business they have also been proven to help boost website conversions and organic traffic, and also reduce support calls, resulting in an increase of productivity.
Examples Of Effective Explainer Videos

There are many different kinds of explainer videos to choose from, all of which will be explained in depth in this guide. But before continuing, here are a few examples of exceptional explainer videos to spark your inspiration!

1. Clipping Path Specialist

This video is effective for many reasons: the funky animation, the bright colours, the quick (but not too quick!) pacing. It also works well because it gets straight to the point. The problem is presented, and then straight after, we hear about the perfect solution. The voiceover works hard to keep the attention of the consumer too.

2. Dollar Shave Club

This video was a viral sensation within hours of uploading – the equivalent of winning the ‘start-up’ lottery. The humorous intro, featuring CEO Michael Dubin, helped Dollar Shave Club make a real splash in an industry already chock-full of established brands.

The video is funny, engaging, and ultimately,
Examples Of Effective Explainer Videos

shareable. Just 48 hours after it debuted on YouTube, a massive 12,000 people had signed up for the service.

3. Chipotle ‘Back to the Start’

Chipotle are far from a start up, but a few years ago they created some stop motion explainer videos to go along with their ‘Cultivate a Better World’ campaign. This video is slightly longer than the usual explainer, at 2 minutes 20 seconds. However, the added length, plus the emotional soundtrack, creates the feel of a short film and that’s what gives it an edge and keeps our attention.

4. Eureka Offers

Your video doesn’t have to be animated. This walkthrough type of explainer video is perfect for mobile apps and website tutorials. This one works particularly well because the device moves effortlessly across the screen, and directs our eye to the features being outlined. The upbeat soundtrack, pleasant voiceover, and the exact 60 second length all contribute to making this a great explainer video example.
BEFORE YOU START

So now you know all about explainer videos, it can be assumed that you’re eager to create your own. But there are many things to consider before you begin, mainly centred around the biggest creative restriction within the marketing industry: Budget.

The great news is that explainer videos are so versatile in their design and length that there is an explainer video to suit every budget. This chapter will equip you with all the facts, and more importantly, the figures, to help you decide what kind of explainer video is perfect for your business.
Unfortunately money doesn’t grow on trees, and until it does, we are always going to be limited by our budgets. A great thing to do before you begin looking for an explainer video is to set aside an ideal budget in your mind. It’s also a good idea to have a maximum price in mind - a price that you would be willing to stretch to if you spotted something exceptional and thought it was worth going the extra mile for!

To give you an idea of what kind of budget is reasonable, here are some useful figures from research on average explainer video prices in 2014/2015:

- 95% of businesses spend less than $5,000 on a one minute animated explainer video
- 78% of people spend less than $1,000 on a screen-recorded explainer video
- 47% spend between $1,001 - $10,000 on live action explainer videos
- 61% of marketers expect to spend more on video in 2015, than they did in 2014

So, this gives you a ball-park of how much budget you should set realistically aside for your video.

It’s also important to set reasonable expectations of how much ‘bang’ you can expect to get for your buck. For example, if you have a thousand dollar budget and you’re looking for Pixar-quality animation, you’re likely to end up disappointed. To put it in perspective, Up, released back in 2009, had a budget of $175 million. At 96 minutes long, this equates to a per-minute cost of a cool $1.82 million!

If you’re completely clueless on exactly how much you should be spending on an explainer video then don’t worry! That’s what this chapter is all about.
Who’s Going To Make It?

Deciding who is going to make your video is an imperative factor to how much it will cost. Maybe you know a friend of a friend who makes videos and you think you can get a good deal. If you do distantly know someone who can make videos then don’t be shy in asking them for a discount! Independent video marketers are often as keen to get their name out there as you are, and may be willing to give you a preferential rate. In any case, it never hurts to ask the question!

If you don’t know anyone, you could think about making the explainer video yourself. It’s not easy, but it’s possible! After all, a great explainer video could be just you and a camera. If you feel comfortable speaking, and you know how to keep the attention of viewers then this could be a great low-cost option. However, it can be quite difficult to get things done all in one take, and if you can’t do that then you’ll need some basic editing software. Luckily, you can get a few beginners editing software packages for free. Windows Movie Maker is a good example. But editing is a time-consuming, and sometimes frustrating task if you are not a professional.

If you want a screen recorded video then this can also easily be done in-house, providing you have the correct software. For example, if you have an iPhone and a Mac you can link the two and record from your iPhone screen using Mac OS X Yosemite. The same thing can be done with an Android phone providing you have Android 4.4 KitKat installed. So if you already have the technology, there’s no real expense for this one. However, the quality of your video will rarely reach that of one that has been professionally recorded, and neither will the quality of your voiceover unless you hire studio time in a professional recording studio. The price of studio time varies, but on average it costs between $60-$120 per hour. However, recording and editing voiceover can be quite a tricky thing to do if you aren’t used to it, and if you did chose to go to an agency the voiceover would likely be included in your overall price.
So, let’s say you decide to use an agency. Just like creating a video in-house, there are many pros and cons to using an agency. An obvious con is the increased expense, but on the other hand, an obvious pro is that it frees you up completely. A lot of companies choose to use an agency to create their video because the finished product always looks more professional than a video created in-house, plus it means someone else is doing all the work for you!

All great agencies will usually have the following included within their price packages:

- Scriptwriting
- Storyboard creation
- Animation (or another form of editing)
- A professional voiceover
- A soundtrack.
There are four kinds of explainer videos that are popular with businesses: Stop Motion, Live Action, Animation, and Screen Recorded. In this section, each will be explained in depth to help you come to a decision as to which would be best for your company.

Stop Motion

Stop Motion is one of the most captivating forms of video production. Essentially, it’s a technique whereby the camera is repeatedly stopped and started to give the impression of movement.

The catch is that, although they look amazing when they’re finished, stop motion videos can be enormously time-consuming and difficult to pull off professionally. This discourages a lot of brands.

Since they are so difficult to make, stop motion explainer videos are quite rare, which gives businesses that are brave enough to take the leap a distinct advantage. Currently, there are only 3.5% of brands that use stop motion videos in their marketing strategies so there is definitely a large gap in the market.

Stop Motion is the process of taking several photographs of one or more inanimate objects (or people) so that they look like they are moving. The effect captured is great but it is such a time-consuming process. It can take several weeks to produce even just a 30 second stop motion video, and it can also be quite expensive. Time is money, as they say.

Live Action

Live action videos typically involve a crew, and a cast, which is why they tend to be the most expensive kind of explainer video. Depending on where or when you need to shoot your video, e.g. outside, or at night, this process can usually take around 6-10 weeks. Due to the added expense, cost of reshooting, and extended time needed to make them, live action videos aren’t the most popular explainer videos around. Although, when they work, they work. The Dollar Shave Club video is a great example of this.
Animation

Animated videos are amazing for engagement because they’re fun and colourful. Even better than that? They’re so inexpensive!

Animated videos are a cost-effective way to explain your product or service because you don’t have to pay for the added cast (like in a live action video), or the added time it takes to create a stop motion video (animated videos can be created in as little as 4 weeks). Additionally, animation videos are completely bespoke as they are drawn from scratch especially for your brand. If you use live action, your viewers may recognise the actors from other projects they have done and this can sometimes lessen the impact of your message.

Animation is also great because you have the scope to create anything you want. For example, if you run a scuba diving school and you want to create an explainer video it will cost a lot less to animate sharks and tropical fish swimming around the screen, than it will to film it in live-action and then edit the footage.

Screen Recorded

Screen recorded videos are great for explaining mobile apps or creating website tutorials. These videos are useful if you need to walk your users through how to use your product. They are also very cost-effective, being the most inexpensive video to create on this list. This is because the only things you need are a device, some recording software, and a professional voiceover. Despite costing less money and requiring less creative input, these videos can still be as engaging as any other type of explainer video.
CHAPTER 1: GET YOUR IDEAS DOWN

Tools you’ll need: Lots of paper! Stationary. Word Processing software. Imagination!

Okay, you’ve got the knowledge, you’ve set aside a budget, and now you’re finally ready to begin bringing your video to life. This chapter is all about the pre-production process.

The planning stage could be classed as the most challenging and time-consuming stage. It’s here that you’ll want to iron out all of the kinks and make sure your idea is completely solid, because from here on out making your explainer video is going to cost money – and the less planning you’ve done, the more mistakes you’ll make, and the more money you’ll spend rectifying it.

By the end of this chapter you will have gone through the entire planning process from idea conception, to getting everything down on paper in a solid, ready-to-use script.
This sounds pretty intimidating, but all a great brief really needs to do is answer a couple of key questions:
What are the objectives of your video? Where will it be positioned? How should it ideally look, sound and feel? And what is the storyline or step-by-step process you’ll use to express that message?

For the purposes of this guide, a typical agency standard brief will be outlined in order to prepare you in the best possible way for the planning stage of creating your explainer video.
Step One: Your Company

This might even prove to be useful if you create your video in-house because it will ensure that everyone is on the same page when it comes to visually presenting the brand. Plus, it can be quite a difficult thing to do so it will help you perfect your writing skills, ultimately preparing you for the script creation!

The first thing that an agency will ask you for is an outline of your company. Think of this as like your ‘elevator pitch’, about 30 words should do it.
But, so much passion can sometimes cloud your vision when it comes to dissecting the key messages that you want your video to convey. We’ve already discussed the ideal length for an explainer video which is typically around the 1-2 minute mark. By definition, this places a limit on how much content you can get across in your video. The skill is to distil your message into a bite size portion for your viewer, stripping away all the nonessentials. You can give this information later on in their buyer journey.

To keep a sense of clarity it is best to limit yourself to no more than three key messages and keep these in mind when you review your video.
For example, if you’re making a video to feature on a platform like Instagram then you’ll be restricted to a 15 second time length – with strict limitations on how ‘salesy’ and promotional you can be. If you’re hosting the video on your website homepage then there will be no restrictions, but, naturally, you’ll be targeting a different audience.

If you’re planning on hosting your video on a variety of different sites, e.g. your website, YouTube, Facebook etc. then you will want to keep all of these sites in mind when creating your video as the viewers on each site are likely to be different people watching the video for different reasons. Your job is to make sure it appeals to all of them.
Step Four: Tone, Style, And Brand Voice

By creating a consistent brand voice you will become more familiar to your audience. And, familiarity builds loyalty and trust.

Tone of voice is not what you say, it’s more about how you say it. For example is your brand humorous and playful, or is it serious? Factors like this will decide how you express your values through your video. Your style will also contribute to how you tell your story through visual means. It is important to include aspects from your brand, like the colors and slogan, in your video.
However, some companies have more than one set of customers, an example being an online tutoring platform that appeals to both students and teachers. This is where you have to make a decision, because it is very difficult to make one video that will successfully engage both students and teachers. Sometimes the best thing to do is to create more than one video. It’s not uncommon, with 72% of businesses claiming to have between 1 and 10 videos.

Step Five: Target Audience

This should possibly be the easiest step for you as if you’re coming to the point of creating an explainer video it can be assumed that you already know which niche you fit into, and who your ideal customer is.
Step Six: Problems Your Customers Face

When making a video it is important to sit down and think of a few of the biggest problems that your customers face. This will be beneficial when it comes to creating your script as you can look at it (or your scriptwriters can look at it) from your customers’ point of view. Your explainer video doesn’t need to speak to you, or your scriptwriters, it needs to speak to the people that encounter the specific problems that your business solves.
Step Seven: How You Solve Those Problems

Steps six and seven are really beneficial because they will help create structure and a natural story arc to your explainer video. Almost any successful story, whether it’s a novel, feature-length film, or a brand video will have this kind of set-up:

Problem – What is stopping your customer (or the character) from being satisfied

What is needed – the customer’s (or character’s) journey of discovering what they need to be satisfied

The Solution – how your brand (or the super-hero, or the hot guy, or the magical nanny) solves the problem completely, once and for all.

The next thing you need to ask yourself is how your brand solves those problems – and solves them better than anyone else around.
Step Eight: Call To Action

There are so many different ways you can approach your call to action, check them out below:

1. Ask a Question: CTAs like ‘What do you value?’ or ‘Can we help you?’ are great at encouraging viewers to take the next step. A lot of people prefer to be asked to do something rather than told. Plus, questions poke at our natural curiosity, and it can be assumed that since the viewer is watching your video they are already curious about your brand.

2. Use Urgency: The use of offers that appear to only be available for a limited time also entice viewers into taking the next step and becoming a customer. Examples of urgent call to actions are: ‘Click to start our free trail!’ or ‘Quote Video10 for 10% off!’

3. Invite them: This is quite a common type of call to action as the message is neutral so viewers don’t feel pushed or pressurised. CTAs that invite are: ‘Join the Conversation’ and ‘Learn more’. These CTAs are also really effective because they show that you are willing to offer the viewer something for nothing, be it advice or a friendly chat.
Step Nine (Optional): Suggested Storyline

A great story is going to build empathy among your audience and take them on a journey that resonates and stays with them.

If you go down the agency route, much of this work lies within their remit, but don’t If you have an idea for your video storyline, don’t be shy about conveying this to an agency. They’ll often welcome your input and work hard to bring your vision to life.

You may even like to complete this step if you are creating your explainer video in-house as it will act like a detailed plan for you when it comes to creating your script.
Step Ten (Optional): Technical Step By Step

These videos revolve around the screens and features shown, so it’s clearly essential to decide on which ones you’d like to use as early as possible.

Defining a technical step-by-step process will help guide you in subsequent steps if you’re making the video yourself – but, equally, if you’re outsourcing the video to an agency, this is going to massively help the scriptwriters understand your app or website.
The reason that it’s so vital to get any flaws and discrepancies out of the way at this stage is because editing only takes an eraser, or the backspace button. From here on out it will get continuously more expensive to make amendments, for example, re-recording a voiceover or changing a character’s looks.

The first decision to make is whether you want to include a voiceover. If you’re looking to connect with customers in lots of different countries then you may want to steer away from having a voiceover or speech as it limits you to one language. Lots of explainer videos work well without the use of speech, as music and sound effects can add a lot of life, including the example below:

Ping

If you would prefer to include multiple voiceovers to appeal to different countries then most agencies are usually happy to do this for a small fee. Plus, if you go with a great agency they will already have lots of connections with multi-lingual voiceover artists so it takes the pressure from you.

It’s always a good idea to include a voiceover, even if it’s only for your reference whilst writing the script because the voiceover is imperative to the length of your final video. Typically, 140 words of a professional voiceover is equal to one minute of video. Or, if you’re creating a live action video then the rule is one page of an industry standard script in 12pt font equals one minute of video.

At the beginning of this ebook, it was advised that you set a specific budget in your mind in order to have realistic expectations on the kind of video you can create. The same applies with length. Now you know how many words are equal to one minute of video you can easily stay in control of your explainer video’s length.
Length is super important for viewer engagement. 94% of people believe that an explainer video should be two minutes or less, and 39% believe they should be no longer than 60 seconds. There is no real rule for how long or short your video should be, but under two minutes is definitely a great guideline considering the longer a video is, the less people will watch it to the end.

If you decide on a length before you put pen to paper then you will find it a lot easier to realistically present your ideas. After all, we’re all passionate about our companies and it can be easy to lose track of time with all of the amazing things you want to say. Be strict with the length, and strict with what you can say, and you’ll find that a much better video will come of it. This is another reason why it’s a great idea to go with an agency, because they have no emotional attachment to your company they will be able to break down what needs to be said to viewers in order to make them want to know more about your business or product. They are professionals after all!

If you created a ‘suggested storyline’, or a ‘technical step by step’ within your brief then you can look at the script stage as an opportunity to flesh this out a bit. Your storyline should always compromise of a set-up that your ideal customer can relate to.

There’s no right or wrong way to write a script, but we find that the best way is to split the document into two equal parts: the voiceover, and the action on screen.
The Script

All of the information you collected in your brief will help you take the next step to creating the perfect explainer video. The script stage is the first solid creative step and, just as it was with the brief, it’s important to get everything right here.

Now, this script was just created for the purposes of this guide, but it gives you a clear idea of what needs to be in an actionable script. The voiceover on the left-hand side equates to 140 words, therefore this will be a 60 second video – a great length for engagement! And on the right-hand side, there is an ‘Action on Screen’ column that explains in detail what will happen in each scene. This is important because when the script gets passed on to our designers, they will have an exact idea of what is expected, and what they need to create and present to the viewer in a visual format.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voiceover</th>
<th>Action On Screen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are you struggling to jump on the content marketing bandwagon?</td>
<td>A male character wearing a suit and carrying a briefcase runs after an old style bandwagon with the words ‘Content Marketing’ across it. He doesn’t manage to catch up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is your video not getting the views you thought it would?</td>
<td>A mock-up of YouTube appears on a laptop screen. A female character is talking to the camera. There are no views for her video. Some tumbleweed floats past her and she looks concerned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sounds like you need a CONTENT MARKETING AGENCY!</td>
<td>The text appears on a stage with flashing lights. Silhouetted audience members can be seen clapping.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content marketing is proven to increase traffic, which gets you more leads, more customers, and ultimately, more profits.</td>
<td>A funnel animates onto screen. Stickmen begin to pour into the funnel and as they do text appears on it, from the top to the bottom: ‘Increase traffic, more leads, more customers, profits.’ Coins pour out of the bottom of the funnel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But why do you need an agency?</td>
<td>The male character from the first scene animates onto screen scratching his head. A question mark appears above him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content marketing agencies are great because not only do they have the knowledge to create awesome content, they also know how to promote it!</td>
<td>The female character’s video from the second scene appears on a computer screen. Lots of interesting things are added to the video and the views start to flick up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Here at Wyzowl, we’ve helped thousands of happy customers, and we’d love to help you too.</td>
<td>The Wyzowl logo animates onto screen surrounded by the client logos and happy faces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have a great team of people that all work together under one roof.</td>
<td>Three-way split screen. One screen shows a writer writing at her computer with the heading ‘Copywriters’. The next screen shows a designer drawing on a computer with the heading ‘Graphic Designers’. The next screen shows an animator working on a video at his computer with the heading ‘Animators’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And we offer unlimited amends, fixed turnaround times, and fixed pricing!</td>
<td>Icons from the website appear on screen to show unlimited amends, fixed turnaround, and fixed pricing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So, you’ll get what you want, when you want, for a price you’ll love!</td>
<td>A computer animates onto screen with an ebook titled ‘My eBook’ on the screen. A love heart animates over it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For more information, contact us today!</td>
<td>The Wyzowl logo animates onto screen along with contact details.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
So, by now you’ve got a great script that will clearly get your message across – perfect! The next step is to create the visual aspects of your video. In this chapter, you will learn all about storyboard creation. A storyboard is a great way to visually plan your video before your begin recording.
What Is A Storyboard?

This is so you can visualise and explain each scene as you progress with creating your explainer video.

At Wyzowl, we like to be a bit different. As we mainly create animated explainer videos we take this opportunity, when creating our storyboards, to present the bespoke graphics as they will appear in the finished video.

All forms of video require a storyboard before recording begins. This is because it ensures everyone knows what they’re doing at every single second of filming, or animating. Your storyboard should act like a blueprint that you can refer back to if you ever get lost whilst recording.
Before You Create Your Storyboard

In the script section we talked about how what you say in your video needs to reflect your brand voice. Therefore, what you show in your video visually must also reflect your brand. Everyone’s graphic style is different and this is what helps you to reinforce your brand through your video. Studies show that people only remember 10% of what they hear, but 80% of what they see, so your video needs to have a visual impact. You need to be unique and memorable.

If you’re working with an agency they will usually ask for a copy of your brand guidelines. By reading this, they can not only find out more about your brand voice, but also what colours you use, how you position your logo, and even how much space to leave around your logo. If you don’t have written brand guidelines, it’s all good...a good agency will typically be able to gauge your preferred brand style from your website and any other assets, and incorporate this style into your video.

It’s also worth looking into design trends at the time of creating your video. Luckily, design trends don’t change with every season like fashion trends, so your video will have a long shelf-life before people start to think of it as ‘dated’. It’s definitely important to take into account what is popular at the time of creating your video, but it is just as important to try and create something unique that sets you apart from the crowd.

The latest design trend is Flat Design. Flat design rose to popularity in 2012 with the release of the Windows 8 operating system. It’s still huge now, and doesn’t show any signs of budging. Many designers saw flat design as a breath of fresh air after the previous reigning trend: Skeuomorphism. Check out the differences below:
Before you begin creating a storyboard, you need to think about the design elements of your video.

The sleek, minimal style of flat design will make your video look professional and fun. It's safe to predict that when flat design finally does 'go flat', material design will become much more prominent. Material design is very, very similar to flat design, but gradients and textures are used tastefully. Take a look at the flat design examples from above when they have been revamped with material design:

So, now you've got the context, let's get stuck in. In case you haven't yet decided which video you would like to create yet, we'll go through the design stage for each in this section.
Stop Motion

This is because storyboards for stop motion videos need to focus more on composition and movement, and less on what the video will look like when it is complete.

Stop motion is such an intricate form of animation, with each movement being equal to one frame, because of this you need to spend a lot of time getting your storyboard just right. Stop motion is so time-consuming that you really won’t want to make a mistake when it comes to animating. A good storyboard can prevent this from happening. The key is to shoot like you don’t have the opportunity to edit.
Live Action

Similar to stop motion, live action videos will also require a traditional sketched storyboard, so that when the time comes to shoot it is clear to everyone involved which shots need filming, and how. Live action storyboards are more like a loose visual plan of filming, with sketches to show certain elements of filming. For example: shot one will be a wide shot of a field with an apple tree in the centre. Shot two will be a close up of the actor, and so on. It’s less regimented than an animation storyboard, and much more focused around composition.

The reason storyboards are not as final when shooting a live-action scene is because camera angles often change depending on what the director believes will look best on the day of production, particularly when shooting out in the elements.
If you’re making the video yourself, then you may not feel the need to lean on a storyboard so heavily because you’ll know your website or app inside out, and as long as you have a script you’ll know where to go and what to do next.

However, an agency will rely heavily on a storyboard, of sorts, to make your screen-recorded video. Storyboards for screen-recorded videos aren’t exactly conventional as they are basically just a screen-captured walk-through. But, they are essential for animators that need to know how to seamlessly navigate through your website or app in order to create the best possible explainer video.
Animated videos are usually the ones that are most associated with the storyboard process.

That’s because absolutely everything that needs animating is illustrated within the storyboard stage. Everything from characters to the background scenes, buildings, animals, every tiny detail you can think of is created for the storyboard. The animation stage is purely for making all of the illustrations move (but more on that later).

So, to begin creating a storyboard for an animated explainer video you first have to create the graphics digitally. An agency creating your storyboard will have already looked at your brand guidelines and have a clear understanding of what you want your video to look like visually. They may also ask questions about what kind of characters you would like to include in your video. Then they will get started creating your illustrations with their chosen software. Here at Wyzowl, we use the vector graphics editor, Adobe Illustrator. We use this software because it allows us to create high quality visuals that are scalable and play nice with After Effects, the editing software we use at the animation stage.

Once all of the graphics are created within Adobe Illustrator, each part of each graphic has to be separated into layers in order to prepare it for animation. So, say you have an illustrated character. His head would have to be in one layer, his right arm in the next, his left arm in the one after, and so on. This is so that each layer, or each component of the character can move independently to make the animation more realistic.
MAKING SOME NOISE!

Life would be pretty boring without sound. That’s why for an explainer video, we suggest to include a voiceover, music and plenty of sound effects!
Step 1: Record Your Voiceover

But if you want your explainer video to be taken seriously then it’s worth getting a professional to record a voiceover.

There are many options out there, some more expensive than others. Check out websites such as Voices.com or Voice Bunny and you can hire an artist from as little as $7!

But if you have a huge budget and you want your video to stand out then you could hire a celebrity voiceover! Sounds like a great idea right? The bad news is this will set you back around $80k on average, so it really does depend on how much you are prepared to spend.

Giving direction...

When you send your script to your chosen voiceover to read, it’s best to give them a little direction on how you want it to sound. Do you want it to be fun? Do you want it to be corporate? Let them know all they need to know about your brand and what you are trying to achieve with this video. And, if you’ve heard a sample that you like then send it their way.

It’s important to steer them in the right direction because if they don’t get it right first time, then you may end up paying more for additional studio time!
Step 2: Choose Your Music

Do you want to it to be dramatic like a movie trailer? Do you want it to have a fun jingle? Do you want it to be happy, or sad? The music really can help to tell the story, so make sure you choose carefully.

Unless you want a billion dollar lawsuit on your hands, we’d always suggest using royalty-free music. You can find plenty of sites out there that offer royalty-free music and there are literally thousands of tracks to choose from! Take a look at AudioJungle, FreeSoundTrackMusic, or PremiumBeat for places that offer good royalty-free music for an average of $18.

Alternatively you could pay a fair amount for licensed music, or get a musician to record a song for you. Once you have your music and voiceover ready, you’ll be able to add them to your video software to work out timings, before you begin to edit your video.
Step 3: Think About Sound Effects

Take a look at your script and think about how the story can be enhanced with a sound effect. Does a door open? Do you want a character to ‘pop’ on screen? Perhaps you want to add walking sounds for your live action video?

Sound effects will definitely bring your story to life, so make sure you give this plenty of thought. It may also help to work on your sound effects once you’ve put your video together, as you’ll get further inspiration once you start to see your video come to life!

If you are looking for sound effects, check out AudioJungle or SoundSnap and you can purchase them for around $2 on average.
So here is the stage where all that hard work planning your script and storyboard pays off, as you get to see it all brought to life!

This is probably the most exciting stage of creating a video, but it’s also the part that’ll take the most time as you focus your efforts on getting the execution exactly as you’d like it to be.
A screen recorded video is great to showcase your website or your mobile app. It can really help show off your product and teach your audience how they can use it to their advantage.

The first thing that you need to do is record all movements from your device using your chosen screen capture software. We use ScreenFlow, but there are other platforms available such as CamStudio, Telestream and Camtasia.

While some platforms are free, they do have limitations, so if you’re looking for a high-quality screen recording then you’re probably going to have to loosen the purse strings a little bit.

Make sure you follow your script so that you capture everything that you want and don’t have to go back and re-record.
First, you need to import your footage, voiceover and music onto the platform. Once that’s done you can add your voiceover and music to the video timeline. Remember, it’s important to do this first because your voiceover and music will help dictate all the timings of the video.

Next you’ll want to use After Effects to create animations for your video.

We really recommend using a 3D model in your video, because it gives a professional look and you can add cool animations. You’ll create these animations in After Effects.

We use a plugin called Element 3D for all of our models!

We talk in more detail about After Effects in the animation section below, but this software basically lets you animate your whole video, so for your screen recorded video you may want to add a cool logo animation or include text on screen.
Editing The Screen Capture

Once you’re happy with the animation you can import it back to Premiere and start adding the finishing touches. Premiere is the place to cut scenes, change speeds and add frame holds, so you end up with a professional masterpiece.

Again, make sure you match your footage to the voiceover, think about pacing, the flow, and play around with transitions so you grab the viewers attention throughout.
Animation

An animated video is arguably the most skilled type of video to create, but it’s also one of the most fun to do!

You should have already split your layers up in the graphics stage so now is the time to take them from Illustrator and import them into After Effects. Now you can start to prepare your graphics so you can make each individual element move.
Anchor points are assigned to let you decide how you control your character and they will look something like this:

The anchor points will automatically default to the middle of a layer, so you then have to move it to where you want the layer to rotate around. For example, the anchor point for an upper arm will be moved to the shoulder, the forearm’s anchor point will be moved to the elbow, and the hand’s to the wrist.

Next up you’ll need to parent your layers, which is basically where you set up a hierarchical linking structure. So say for example with a character, you’ll typically use the hips as the parent, and then the body, legs, arms, head will link to that and move with it.

Top tip: Using an inverse plugin like DuIK will help you create more complex character movements.

Once you’re happy with your character or graphics, you’ll start to make them move using key frames. Make sure you follow your script and take your time, on
average it takes around a day to animate 30 seconds of character animation.

**Top tip:** Use the puppet tool in After Effects to move the shape of the graphical element and make your character less rigid.

It’s also a great idea to think about the transitions that you want to use here that will lead on to different scenes. After Effects does come with some cool transitions, but it’s also really easy to make your own.
You’ll follow a similar process to a screen recorded video.

Simply import the voiceover and After Effects files to Premiere. Then, you can work out the timings of the animation alongside the voiceover. This is also the time to add sound effects, and finish by adding the music.
A live action explainer video can benefit your company if you want people to get to know the face behind the brand. Live action films are often created by more corporate companies such as Law firms, as it can really help to humanize your production in a professional way.
For those who don’t speak French, this basically means capturing the right kind of story.

So you’ve already outlined what you want to say at the script stage, but now it’s time to think about the location of your shoot and what items (other than yourself) will be in shot.

Remember that everything in shot will say a little something about who you are, so make sure you think twice about featuring that dirty bowl of beans left over from lunch!

For now, let’s stick with the lawyer theme. You’ll want to tell a professional, trustworthy, corporate story. Locations for your video may be in your offices, or in a library. Try not to have too many distractions in your film, and keep the focus on the person in front of the lens.
These are both just as important as each other, and will probably take you the most time to get them exactly right.

To get the best sound make sure you have someone there to operate the boom mic. In regards to lighting, three point lighting is great for an interview style video as it offers the perfect balance.

Three point lighting includes:

Key light: This is the main light that will point at the speakers face.

Fill light: This balances the main lighting and will help remove any shadows.

Back light: This shines on the person from behind and aims to highlight them.

Top tip: Do a couple of sound and lighting tests before you do the full shoot so you don’t have to waste time re-shooting your entire video.
We’d also suggest using more than one camera so you can switch between different angles and keep your viewers engaged from start to finish.

A teleprompter can also help you remember your lines during filming, and it's a great way to help you look like a natural in front of the camera!

Check out our example of a live action video, to see the style that we decided to go with, to explain the ideal length of an explainer video.
Some of the best tools that we’d recommend to do your edits include: Avid Media Composer, Final Cut Pro, Adobe Premier Pro, and Da Vinci.

When it comes to editing your film, you need to consider cutting up the footage and using different camera angles to keep it interesting. Our best advice is to think about how you link one scene to another, keep the pace up and don’t linger on scenes where there is little movement.

Once you’re happy with the edit, you can begin work on your music choice, and any additional graphics to really bring your video to life.

You’ll also work on color correction here, to boost the contrast and saturation for the overall look and feel of the video.
This is an interesting method, and possibly an unusual choice for an explainer video, but who says you have to follow the crowd? This type of video will take the longest amount of time to create because you have to film your entire video frame by frame.

Tools you’ll need: Camera, Dope Sheet, Product/characters/objects, Editing software
This will help you plan out what you’re going to film, by each frame.

In a stop motion video you need to have your voiceover and animatic pieced together before filming, so you can work out how your characters or products are going to move in the video.

You now need to transfer that information onto a dope sheet as this gives you the instructions needed for each frame, to decide when everything will move and if you want a character’s mouth to move.
Shooting The Film...

You need to carefully film everything frame by frame (which is something we like to call straight ahead animation), so every single movement on screen needs to be thought about.

Similar to a live action video, lighting and location is something to think about here. Although you’ll want to make sure your lights and background stays the same throughout, you shouldn’t worry too much if you don’t always get it spot on, as it all adds to the quirky style of a stop motion video.

We’d suggest keeping your camera static to help save your time and keep the animation consistent. Adding pauses is another great trick because this gives you plenty of freedom at the editing stage to cut things up – and it’ll save you having to go back and re-shoot.

**Top Tip:** Check out DragonFrame as this will let you hook your camera up to your computer so you can check out each frame on your desktop.
As mentioned above, using software such as After Effects or Premiere Pro, you’ll be able to animate everything together by cutting scenes, adding cool transitions and making sure the entire video flows well.

When it comes to editing the footage, you’ll need to look back at your dope sheet and make sure that your voiceover is timed together by each frame so that you end up with a winning piece of animation.
Congratulations – you’ve created an awesome explainer video! Good job.

So what’s next?

Well, you need to go ahead and promote it as much as you can. The aim of course, is to get your video to go viral – so check out some of our best practices that you can put in place to make this happen!

First step is to choose a hosting solution. There are plenty out there, some like YouTube are free, and some are more suited for businesses...

Here’s our top picks:
Wistia

You can upload as many videos as you like and see fascinating metrics on how well your video is performing.

The metrics include how long people are staying engaged, play rate, how many people have watched it, user demographics, SEO tools and more.

**Cost:**

Free to $143 per month
Vimeo

You can sign up for a free account which will let you upload 10 videos daily and 1 HD video weekly.

They do have paid account options which allow you more storage space and offer stats on where people are watching them and if people are liking or leaving comments.

**Cost:**

Free to $76 per year
Vzaar

Not that many people use Vzaar, but the companies that do use it are brands like IBM or Bench, so it must be doing something right! You don’t get the option to have a free account, but you will find a bunch of extra features...

You can all the metrics that you’d expect from a paid for account, edit your video layout, preset download options and more.

Cost:

Free to $430 per year
YouTube

Upload your video to YouTube and you can add subtitles, descriptions and various other data to help optimize it.

If you did want to host on YouTube then as a business, it’s worth personalizing your channel. Make sure you write clear descriptions and add tags so that it’ll help your video appear in search engines.

It’s also worth considering using this channel for advertising and it’s really easy to do. Simply upload your video to YouTube, create an AdWords account, set the amount you’d like to spend and launch your video ad.

Cost:

Free
Embed It To Your Homepage

Placing it on your homepage is the logical choice to make because it should be the first thing that people click onto to find out more about you.

In fact, a video can increase people's understanding of your product by 74% - so when a person lands on your homepage, you need to make sure that they are drawn to your video.
GETTING IT IN FRONT OF THE WORLD

Above Or Below The Fold?

When it comes to your explainer video, we still believe that it should take pride of place at the top of your homepage. Sure, web design and technology has changed, but we always start at the top of the page. And considering your explainer video is the fastest way to tell a person what you do, it should really be the first thing they click onto.

But what if they don’t land on my homepage?

Clearly, not every visitor will come in via your homepage. But a new customer will look for the homepage as a way to find out everything they need to know about your brand.

You should aim to include action buttons on your landing pages that will lead the viewer back to your explainer video. Like this one below from our friends at Washport.

Back in 2010 it was reported that 80% of a web users time is spent above the fold, but with parallax scrolling and smartphones changing the way we view the web, does this still apply today?
Email Your Database

According to Forrester Research, when marketers included an explainer video in an email, it actually increased the click through rate by up to 300%

You should be able to easily embed your video to your email template using your email provider.
SPREAD THE NEWS ON SOCIAL

Social is a fantastic channel to promote your video. We all know the value of social marketing, but coming up with content to post can often be a struggle. So this is the time to really make the most of your awesome new video.
Facebook

Although this means you’re more likely to capture a person’s attention, the problem with Facebook is that you are restricted to how many people you can reach.

Typically if you have 100 followers, you’ll reach around 3 of them with your post.

So what can you do?

Facebook lets you pay to promote your posts and this is a great way to direct the right people to your video. It’s really easy to do too. Simply click boost post, choose the audience that you want to see your video, and then select your budget.

You can spend as much or as little as you like, and depending on how much you set, depends on how many people you reach. So you’ll get a clear view of how well your post has been received.

**Best time to post on Facebook:**

Weekdays: 1pm – 4pm
Twitter

Although Twitter has just rolled out video as a build-in feature for the app, you won’t be able to upload your full explainer video.

You can however post a picture, so what we suggest is to grab the best part of your video, include it in your tweet and post a link back to the full video. Make sure you include relevant hashtags to help get as many eye-balls on your video as you can.

Similar to Facebook, you can pay to promote your tweets, promote your account or promote a trend. And the cost is worked out on how much engagement you receive so the more people like your video, the more you’ll pay.

Best time to post on Twitter:

Monday to Thursday: 9am to 3pm
Google+/YouTube

The platform also lets you upload your own videos, so you can directly post your video.

To get the best exposure on this platform, it’s best to post your video into a community that is relevant to your product. Make sure you don’t spam the group, invite questions, include hashtags and encourage people to leave comments.

Currently you can’t advertise within Google+ but you can advertise on YouTube. To do this you’ll need to sign up for an AdWords account and then you can run your video ad campaign, set your budget and target audience. Your ad will then play at the start of a video.

The viewer does get the choice to skip the after 5 seconds so again, it’s important that your video engages right off the bat.

**Best time to post on Google+:**

Everyday: 9am to 10am
LinkedIn

LinkedIn lets you embed the video directly on your feed so you can share it with your community.

Don’t forget to include a link back to your site so people can find out more about you.

LinkedIn does allow you to pay for sponsored updates that will help you reach a larger audience across the platform. This is a good option to target business professionals who would be interested in your product. You can set your own budget, select your intended audience and stop your ads at any time.

**Best time to post on LinkedIn:**

Monday to Fridays: 10pm to 6am

So there are just a few of the social platforms that you can use when promoting your video. Although we’ve offered the best times to post, it’s important to remember that your audience will differ from other businesses.

To get the most out of your video, make sure you learn from the metrics that your hosting provider offers so that you can make adjustments to help get the full potential from your explainer video!
A great explainer video is a powerful marketing asset for any business. With an explainer video you can dramatically increase your online visibility, reach new customers, generate fresh leads, and develop a stronger connection with existing customers.

Plus, with 85% of people more likely to buy a product once they watch a video about it, an explainer video really is the best way increase your conversions. It’ll help generate more interest, liven up your pitch, give your brand personality and even push you up the search rankings.

We hope this e-book has given you everything that you need to create your very first explainer video! But if you want help from the experts then make sure you contact us today.