

### **PREFACE**

#### #WELCOMETOTHEAGEOFEMOTION

#### 'NOW ... WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH HIM?!'

It wasn't until about the third hour of sitting in a Cuban prison, with a Fidel Castro mural towering above me, that I realised I may have taken videography a little too far. I had been detained by Cuban authorities on New Year's Eve. It turns out that bringing a drone into the country was illegal. So was flying it over the streets of Havana.

We'd spent a good week filming in and around Havana, and it wasn't until our last day on the communist island that I had been detained. Luckily for me I spoke Spanish. During my detention, I could hear what the young (and I mean no older than 21!) prison officer was saying to his colleagues over the phone. He had no idea what to do with someone with a drone, and it seemed that nobody else did either.

He had repeated himself a good couple of dozen times: 'Yes, the subject has been identified: a British citizen holidaying on the island. Flights booked back for tomorrow. Now ... what should I do with him?!' This went on for hours before somebody called the immigration police in. They came to the police station, and after much more discussion it was decided that I wasn't a threat to national security and I could be released.

The immigration police took us back to our hotel. In the police car on the way back, they told us that Cuba has a huge military parade on the first of January every year, and that I had been flying my drone down some streets that were cordoned off. For all they knew I was a foreign spy! That – apart from making me feel super cool – kind of explained the situation. I'm sure if I had flown a drone over the route of a parade in the UK or Australia, I would have suffered the same fate.

After getting back to my Airbnb house (the owner was not happy to see the police arrive at their house as they were having guests over for their New Year's Eve celebrations) and showing the police my ID, they let me go without charge.

I later realised I had been *really* lucky that evening. Because it had been a public holiday and all the big cheeses were unavailable, this young prison officer – who had been left in charge of Havana's main prison – had no idea what to do with me. He rang countless people but couldn't find anybody who knew how to deal with a drone situation. Without being able to get the help he needed, and knowing that I clearly saw he didn't know what to do with me, he finally let me go. Had it not been New Year's Eve and had the senior officers been in charge, it could have been a completely

different story. Upon landing back in Australia, I found out that a Canadian tourist had been locked up for 14 days in solitary confinement for doing *exactly* the same thing I had done that day in Cuba.

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Choosing a story to begin this book was an arduous task. I wanted to demonstrate how powerful emotions are when telling a story, and how video is the best medium available for eliciting emotions. So let me now tell you about one of the most engaging videos I've ever been involved with: a video review for a Sunbeam electric blanket.

Were you expecting me to tell you about the videos we made while on the Cuba trip? They were great videos. But despite all of the Cuban adventures, the best performing video I've ever been involved with was a review for an electric blanket. It's as simple as that. We made a video review for an electric blanket. It was two minutes long, and it lives on the product page of Appliances Online – Australia's largest appliance online retailer.

What is remarkable about this seemingly ordinary video is the stats behind it! If you were to consider all videos that exist online and rank them in order of how engaging they are, this video would rank in the top 1% or 2% of videos ever made! And it's about an electric blanket. Just in case you still didn't get that ... it's about a blanket!

This video has a 94% average engagement record. That means that pretty much every person in the world who watches this video watches the whole thing. To put that into perspective, Vidyard (a leading video agency in America) has reported that only the top

5% of online videos record an average engagement level of 77% or more. This video smashes that figure.

Have a think about what that can mean for your business. A video made about an electric blanket outperformed videos about a trip to Cuba.

So why am I telling you this?

Because emotion comes in all different shapes and sizes. It's subjective, relative, and in so many cases different for so many people. But emotion is what drives storytelling, and storytelling is what allows businesses to connect with their customers. That connection is what will enable your business to thrive and cut through the noise that your competitors are making. That connection will make your business make money. Create a compelling story about an electric blanket and people *will* watch it.

The increasing popularity of emojis to communicate via text shows that pictures are still our preferred method of communication. It almost seems like language is going full circle back to hieroglyphics. That is why video is more important than ever now. Moving pictures are like emojis on steroids! Video keeps proving time and time again that it's *the* most engaging way to consume information online. If you don't believe me, trust Mark Zuckerberg, who recently said, 'in a decade, video will look like as big a shift in the way we share and communicate as mobile has been'.

We are well and truly in the Age of Emotion. In this book I will share some of my knowledge on how to best harness it through the power of video.

#### 'NO-ONE KNOWS WHAT WE DO'

Stevan came to me one day seeking help. He had just sold his company to TripAdvisor, a multi-million-dollar deal that, by anyone's standards, meant Stevan had made it in life! He was still acting CEO after the acquisition, and when I asked him how we could help his business his answer was very clear: 'No-one knows what we do'.

I was staggered by his response. My first thought was, 'Everyone knows what you do – TripAdvisor just bought you!'

And then it hit me. No matter how big a company is, business owners around the world all have the same problems. We struggle in getting our message some exposure, we have trouble reaching prospects, we tussle to generate leads, to convert those leads and to retain customers.

My line of work allows me to amplify business owners' stories – each and every story compelling and unique. My work brings their brands exposure, it brings about leads who then convert into customers. It generates revenue for them.

Some people say I work in video production; the reality is that it's a lot more than that. I'm in the business of *feelings*. As we move further and further into the Age of Emotion, it is clear that business is conducted from an emotional level. You need people to feel certain things if you want them to act certain ways. If you want prospects, make them feel like you're an industry leader. If you want leads, elicit trust. If you want sales, excite your leads!

This book will show you how to harness all these emotions to benefit your business. And it will focus on doing it through the most powerful medium available to businesses: video.

I will show you the ins and outs of emotive storytelling, and how to start on a DIY video path to make sure your brand connects and engages with as many possible customers as you can.

#### SO WHO IS THIS MICHAEL LANGDON GUY?

If I expect you to take my advice, it's only fair that I tell you a little bit about myself first. I was born in Hackney, East London, in 1985, and within two weeks I was on a plane to Colombia to meet my dad and my brother. I'd like to think that travelling at such an early age is what spurred my love for travel later in life.

My parents were both teachers and business owners. They owned an English Language school in the centre of Bogota. My mum would run it from 6 am to about 2 pm, and then my dad would do the evening shift, from about 4 pm to 9 pm. During the day, dad taught IT at the school I went to. It was one of, if not *the* best school in the country. I remember the children of the President of Colombia were a couple of years above me at school.

But one day things changed drastically – my ever-loving parents had a big fight. Fast forward two years, and the relationship was over. My brother, who was a young adult by this point, had flown the nest, but I was still a 13-year-old boy who very much relied on my mother. She wanted to leave the country as soon as possible as the break up of the marriage had really affected her, so she asked

me to pick a country to live in! I was torn between going back to England or going to the US, as we had loads of family in Miami.

I chose Miami, and off we went. In hindsight, this is probably where that special bond with my mum began. I really enjoyed my life in Miami, but due to visa restrictions our time there was limited to six months, so we returned to the UK. I went to college in Watford for two years. I then lived in Bournemouth for three years while I studied Multimedia Journalism.

It was during my time at university that I was first introduced to a camera and non-linear editing software. I was besotted with videography from the get-go. I had always loved telling stories, but this emotive and engaging medium pulled at my heart strings in different ways. I felt like I could make the most trivial of things into a Hollywood production (even though when I watch them now the production values leave a hell of a lot to be desired!).

My first foray into videography was making videos for and about my friends. When our football team folded I made an emotional video about us cut to the song *Winds of Change* by The Scorpions. I loved eliciting emotions out of people, and that feeling has carried on through to my professional life.

My first job out of university was as a runner for an online TV channel about the stock market in London. It's funny how I always wanted to do online video, never films or broadcast television. I'd like to think that it's the maverick in me that knew online video production was the way of the future!

After impressing my boss with my running skills, he quickly allowed me to film and edit for the channel. It was all very basic.

One of my favourite parts of the job was every Friday lunchtime when we'd go for a curry. That was my first introduction to long lunches. 'If anyone asks, we were entertaining a client,' my boss would say. My naive self just nodded as I had yet another sip of my Cobra beer.

As I had gained experience in video production, I decided that the time was right to do what I had always wanted to do: travel! One of my best friends and I decided to go to the US to 'work' as football coaches. We saw the whole of the east coast of America while coaching football in the afternoons. That was one of the best years of my life.

I then travelled around South East Asia. I was filming and editing YouTube vlogs of my travels, and they proved very successful. Networks in Australia were paying me ridiculous amounts of cash (ridiculous for a backpacker anyway!) to use my footage. This enabled me to keep travelling. My videos were inspiring people to follow on the journey. Unfortunately, my money ran out and I had to go back to England to work.

I ended up working as a videographer and editor for a company that sent me around the world to film and edit vox pops. They used these videos to showcase market research findings. This was my first 'real' job, and I learned how to hone my filming and editing skills from the people at the company.

Just as I was feeling like I was reaching the end of my learning curve, I got head-hunted by Appliances Online in Australia. One of my friends from university reached out, and before I knew it I was on a plane to Sydney to begin what was another defining period of my life.

Appliances Online wanted to start capitalising on video content. What started out as a man with a handy cam when I got there grew into a fully fledged video production arm, with 12 staff going into the studio to produce 100 product reviews every six weeks.

The data we got from how video increased revenue for the company was mind-blowing (more on this later in the book). It really showed me the positive effect video could have on businesses. All the way from increasing leads to converting them, video meant money!

Five years and a fiancée later, I left the group to start helping small business owners benefit from the incredible power of video. I founded Serious Levity with the help of Stacey, my better half. This is a chapter of my life that has only just begun. So far we have helped dozens of business owners communicate their message in a clearer and more concise way.

It's an exciting time ahead, and I hope this book helps you implement video into your business to help you better communicate and engage with your customers!

Welcome to the Age of Emotion. Let's ride ...

# 3. VIDEO GROWTH BY THE NUMBERS

**There is a vast array** of mind-blowing data about online video. I don't usually doubt the veracity of this information as I've seen the benefits of video first hand, but it can be tricky to track down the study or research that determined such stats. With that in mind, before I delve into other people's findings regarding video, I'll start with some of my own research and findings.

#### **RESEARCH AND FINDINGS**

The bulk of my video experience comes from online retail. I have produced over 2000 appliance reviews which have generated more than 15 million views. I was fortunate to work for such an innovative company like Appliances Online in Australia. They invested a lot of time and money into their Research & Development department. The scientists they have working in that

department really are at the forefront of what they do, and they agreed to carry out some scientific research into the effect that videos had on the company.

#### A 142,000% return

Now this wasn't some basic A/B testing or conversion testing. This was lines and lines of equations with thousands of variables analysed. These variables included things you would only associate with rocket science! These were analysed to determine whether or not having a video on a product page helped the company sell more of that product.

The results were staggering.

For one particular fridge, the data scientists concluded that for every hour of video review watched, the company sold six fridges. That was irrespective of anything else! At the last time of checking that video had sold them 804 fridges retailing at \$709. That's over half a million dollars in revenue attributed *solely* to this *one* video! A video that cost approximately \$400 to produce. For those who like figures, that's a return of over 142,000%!

I've obviously picked the hero finding of our Research & Development team. Not all videos had that sort of impact, but they did conclude, unequivocally, that having a video on a page increased sales.

#### Quadrupled conversion rates

My other big finding from my time at Appliances Online was that when a video was placed on a product page it quadrupled

conversion rates. The company had a steady conversion rate that was average across all products they sold. We found that when we added a product video review to any product we sold it would, on average, increase the chance of conversion by four times. For example, if 100 people were to land on a page that sold a washing machine, we could expect one sale. If we were to add a video product review for that washing machine, that number would increase to four people purchasing per 100 visits. And this was a site average, which meant some products converted at higher than 4×! Increasing conversion rates is an integral part of any business that wants to increase revenue, and finding how valuable video was to Appliances Online customers helped us in trying to deliver the best possible customer service we could.

#### 80% of internet traffic in 2018

In 2016 we interviewed Kevin Bloch, who is the CTO (Chief Technology Officer) of Cisco in Australia and New Zealand. He told us studies carried out by Cisco had determined that 80% of internet traffic in 2018 would be video traffic. The biggest learning I took out of this was that if a business had not yet harnessed video content then they were really missing out on the huge opportunities it brings!

#### The second-largest search engine

There's a game I like to play whenever I do public speaking engagements, and that is to ask the audience what the world's biggest search engine is. Everyone obviously correctly guesses Google. The fun begins when I then ask what the world's second-largest search engine is. Everyone offers the usual suspects:

the Bings, the Yahoos, the Altavistas and Lycos (yup, even though I haven't heard of them in over 20 years!). But seldom does someone guess the correct answer. And when I tell them what it is, you can see the whole room have a collective penny-drop moment as to the magnitude and relevance of video.

The answer? YouTube.

YouTube has over one billion users, meaning that almost a third of the internet uses their platform. According to a 2017 *Forbes* article, YouTube mobile consumption has risen by 100% every year. That means that people watching video on their mobile is doubling at unprecedented rates. That goes to show the impact that video is having globally at the palm of our hands. It is no longer reserved for a big-screen experience. And it's not just YouTube that is enjoying this growth; it's evident that Facebook is also embracing this trend, with 100 million hours of videos watched every day!<sup>3</sup>

#### More great numbers

Depending on which marketing company you speak to, they will present you with different data. As previously stated, my experience shows that my videos quadrupled conversion rates. According to Eyeview Digital, including a video on a landing page can increase conversion rates by up to 80%. Marketing software giants HubSpot are also big advocates of video, and they claim that 52% of marketing professionals see video as having the biggest return on investment out of all types of content. They have also

<sup>3</sup> https://www.forbes.com/sites/miketempleman/2017/09/06/17-stats-about-video-marketing/#2e8e5b71567f

#### 3. Video growth by the numbers

run experiments which show that after watching a video, 64% of users are more likely to buy a product online.

And the big one from HubSpot, which we ourselves have seen work wonders for our business, is using video in an email. HubSpot's studies show that having a video in an email leads to a 200% to 300% increase in click-through rates.

I myself have had a video signature on my email for the last year or so, and the response has been incredible! People approach me at networking events saying they feel as if they already know me. I've also had referrals turn into leads straight from my video signature, with people writing in the comment section of the video that they want to team up and produce video content for their website straight away.

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The world is quickly turning to video to communicate, and videos have a huge opportunity to help business owners. Whether it's to generate more exposure from their business via SEO (Google ranks pages with video content higher) all the way through to conversion, the beauty of video is that – when used properly – it can help solve almost any customer-related problem a company may be experiencing. I've seen it time and time again.

In the next chapter we'll try to determine what problems *your* business may be having (from my experience, most business owners suffer from the same problems, just at different scales) and how to use video to help solve them.

# 4. HOW TO USE VIDEO TO ATTRACT AND KEEP CUSTOMERS

**Videos can help solve most** customer-related problems a business may have. It's very important to first have a frank and candid discussion within the business before the production process begins, to determine exactly what problem you are trying to solve. It's crucial to focus on one problem only per video as a single video can't be the saviour of all things.

## WHY DO YOU NEED VIDEO FOR YOUR BUSINESS?

The problems generally fall into one of four aspects of a business's selling funnel:

- attracting suspects
- educating prospects

- converting leads
- connecting with customers.

Let's have a look at each of these.

#### Attracting suspects

A 'suspect' is pretty much anyone out there who could use your product, but they are unaware your offering will solve a problem they have. They probably don't even see it as a problem yet!

This is a big category where video can help. Businesses often come to me because they have a great product and/or service but they feel like no-one knows about them. They want to make waves, but are dumbfounded as to why not many people know about them.

The key with suspects is to capture their attention quickly (more so than any other category), and to make the viewer relate to a problem they have – or make them aware that there is a problem. Once you have established the problem, the next phase is to answer the questions they have as to how you and/or your product fixes this problem.

Some of the best videos to make for suspects are vlogs (video blogs) and attention-seeking promotional content. The reason why a good *entertaining* vlog (I must emphasise the word entertaining) works is that suspects are more than likely in entertainment mode and not conscious of anyone selling to them. This is where you really target their limbic system. One of my most popular vlogs (in terms of engaging with suspects) was a video I did on tips to film with your iPhone. I had quite a few people

interacting with me and thanking me for sharing my knowledge. I must emphasise that these free video guides I share on my social channels really are done without expecting anything in return. The benefits I get are tremendous though, and I know that I am front of mind for all these strangers should they ever require professional video services.

The beauty of working with businesses and business owners is that they are all experts at something that they do. Just as I'm an expert in filming with an iPhone, a mortgage broker will be an expert in the housing market and could give tips on that, or an electrician could be an expert in lightbulbs and give you tips on your lighting efficiency at home.

In terms of attention-seeking promotional videos, we used to work with Seasoned Music Festival. They came to us when they wanted to grow their brand awareness and reach among young adults in Sydney – a perfect example of targeting suspects. We created a funky, upbeat video of one of their festivals that began with a woman smashing a water balloon in the face of an attractive young man. This video was shared on Facebook thousands of times, and got people tagging hundreds of friends asking if they wanted to go. The video was a huge success in attracting suspects to Seasoned Music

Another great way to attract suspects is by producing 'frequently asked questions' videos. At Appliances Online we did plenty of these, which we shared on YouTube (the world's second-largest search engine (a)). We were answering questions such as, 'What is an integrated dishwasher?', 'What is a top-load washing machine?' or 'What is a pyrolytic oven?'. YouTube would then

drive traffic back to our website, and often this would result in a purchase if the viewers were based in Australia.

#### **Educating prospects**

'Prospects' are aware they have a problem and they are looking at different providers to solve it. This is where a great video can become an invaluable part of your arsenal, as they are great for eliciting trust and guiding prospects further down the funnel.

The key when producing videos for this segment is to give them more in-depth answers and to have a more tailored and specific approach to how you answer their questions. This is also where you specify what your unique selling points are. To use Appliances Online as an example again, it was at this stage we made videos for prospective customers that told them we could match any price found on the internet *plus* we offered free next-day delivery.

We used these videos as pre-roll adverts on YouTube (so viewers had to sit and watch for 15 seconds) for people who were searching 'How to fix my washing machine' and 'How to fix my fridge'. They were clearly prospects as their washing machine or fridge was broken, and when they saw our unique offering, many thought twice about fixing their appliances and instead considered buying a new one! These adverts proved very successful and the click-through rate was huge.

Another successful prospect video we made was a promotional film for EduComply. EduComply is a bit of software that helps schools in NSW stay compliant with all the rules and regulations that govern the safety of children while they are at school. It was

very impactful in that it answered questions and showed multiple problems EduComply could solve (exactly what prospects are after!) in two minutes. It also hooked viewers in from the start as it had a powerful message telling schools what the worst possible outcome was if they didn't follow and implement government procedures.

It is very important to educate, build trust, and position yourself as a leader in your industry when you are producing videos for prospects.

#### Converting leads

'Leads' are people who have already decided on an offering and just need to know a few more finer details to decide *who* they're going to buy this product/service from.

A lot of marketers think that this is where people are rationalising a purchase, but as scientists have discovered, rationalising comes post-purchase and as a means to justify the emotional plunge our limbic system takes. That's why it's very important to be aware of emotion here too. What feelings do we want to elicit from our customers now that they are so close to purchasing, as it's not a matter of *if* they purchase but *who* they purchase from?

Videos for leads include product reviews, how-to videos that showcase the features of your product/service, and customer testimonials. Videos for leads is where the bulk of our experience comes from. To keep with the theme of videos for Appliances Online (and for you to see the full spectrum of types of videos for one company), this is where we produced over two thousand video reviews for most of the products the company sold.

The most important thing we told our scriptwriters was to ensure the scripts were outcomes and feelings based. Yes, we were selling a dishwasher, but what was it about this dishwasher that was going to make the life of a single father of one a lot easier? We always asked our scriptwriters to relate the video to an everyday living occurrence that would benefit our customers. For example, a dishwasher that had a 'half-load' function would mean that Dad could buy that large dishwasher for when he was entertaining but wouldn't waste too much water and electricity if he used the half-load function when it was just him and his little one every other weekend. That sort of visualisation and emotion would help our leads turn into customers.

Another example could be the 'delay' function on a washing machine. Our scriptwriters were very adept at not just highlighting the fact that it existed, but on focusing on how that tiny little button could make your life so much more convenient! If you had to rush out to the office at 8 am, you'd simply delay the end of your washing until you got home. That would essentially mean the washer would do the washing while you were at work, and finish as you were walking through the door just in time to hang it up. No damp, smelly clothes because they'd been sitting wet at the bottom of the drum all day – surely everyone hates damp, smelly clothes!

We have a lot of customers who come to us and tell us they are happy with the traffic they are attracting but lack conversion power. Arguably this is the best asset of online video. One of the best ways to convert is to produce customer testimonial videos. Your customers, more often than not, are *a lot* better at communicating the problem your other customers are having. And once

you've delighted them, they will become your biggest marketing tool.

These videos are quite easy to produce too – all it takes is asking them how happy they were with your service and whether they would recommend you and why. If you have given them a remarkable service you'll be surprised at how long they can praise you for.

These videos have to be genuine. Don't ever fall into the trap of getting an actor to stage these. People are too savvy nowadays, and it will actually be detrimental to your brand if they see right through you. Seeing (and hearing) someone who was previously in their shoes explain how your product has made their life better is probably your biggest marketing tool and a sure way to convert leads into customers.

Another great way to convert leads into customers is to record live webinars that showcase your expertise. The two most popular webinar recording platforms are gotomeeting.com and zoom.us. Try these if you have a great idea for a webinar and enough people interested to watch it. Some of my customers think they would not get enough people to join them live for a webinar and are consequently put off doing one. Remember that these webinars are there to live forever. You can distribute them after doing the webinar, so their shelf life is not limited to whoever is watching live. A very popular tactic among some of our customers is to repurpose their webinars into short videos of all the different topics they cover. These sometimes prove to be more successful when uploaded to YouTube than when delivered live. Webinars are an incredible tool to demonstrate you're a leader in your field and are mighty at converting leads into customers.

#### Connecting with customers

'Customers' are people who have already bought from you. You may think that videos for this segment are futile, but in actual fact some of our best results have come from videos we have produced for customers.

The problem some of our customers have is that they are not generating enough repeat business from existing clientele. They also feel they are not achieving the connection and brand loyalty they would expect from their clientele. Luckily for them, video is all about connection!

At Appliances Online, we used to get the CEO (bear in mind this is a big company with 500-plus staff) to record personalised video messages for customers when he just wanted to say 'thanks for shopping with us'. These videos proved to be great PR, as the word of mouth about the legendary service they received (which even included a personalised thank you video from the CEO!) would start doing the rounds on social media.

We even used these types of videos to communicate with our customers when things didn't go so well. There was an occasion when a few hundred customers were not going to get a delivery they were promised. It was a big mess up on our behalf and we were truly sorry. We knew a simple email was just not going to cut it, so we decided to record a video apology from the CEO. Although we did receive some backlash from customers, there was a large proportion of people who appreciated the apology and the fact that the CEO himself had taken the time to connect with the customers who had been let down by the delayed delivery.

It seemed that, despite our stuff up, people were appreciative of the personal touch to the apology that only a video can bring.

The most successful video for existing customers of Appliances Online was the livestreaming series we produced for the company's eleventh birthday. We had tens of thousands of views every day, and hundreds of daily shares on Facebook. We had well and truly managed to connect with our existing client base.

We were giving away prizes (which helped a lot!), but more importantly we had hundreds of our existing customers tuning in every morning at 11 am to engage with us live. Every customer that we spoke to on the phone would sing our praises and tell us they were delighted with the service we were giving them and that they would be our customers for life. This was, of course, a culmination of all areas of the business delivering a great experience, but the video content and platform we were providing to them to communicate with us was the icing on the cake. You could tell they really felt valued.

Another great way to use video with existing customers is to communicate new product launches with them. They will feel special that they are first to know about the product, and this will cement their brand loyalty.

At the time of writing we are working with one of our partners on a training video for their new software. They have released the software to their customer base but it hasn't really been picked up. Our partner feels frustrated because they *know* their product will save their customers time and money. Producing a short promotional video highlighting all the key points of the software will whet their customers' appetite and generate interest. The

#### Welcome to the Age of Emotion

two-pronged attack will be finished off with a longer in-depth training video on each feature of the software.

Our experience shows us that this will solve our partner's concerns as their clients will feel both excited *and* comfortable using the software, and that in turn will increase the uptake of their software.

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I have hopefully demonstrated in this chapter that video can be an invaluable asset at any point of your customers' purchasing journey. If used correctly, be prepared for growth.

Now that you know *what* problems video can solve, in the next few chapters I'm going to delve into the technical aspects of *how* to produce videos.