

Social Video Apps:



An Opportunity to Engage and Network

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We are in the App Age. There is an app for just about everything from customizing and mailing birthday cards (Cards) to asking a doctor for medical advice (HealthTap). If you are concerned about your caloric intake, Meal Snap enables you to take a picture of your meal with your phone or tablet and it estimates how many calories are in the meal. If you are away and really need to see a loved one's face or talk to a colleague, Skype allows you to make video calls and chat with your Skype contacts for free. If you love to share random facts as icebreakers, OMG Facts is full of interesting information that you can use to get a conversation started. And accessing your Facebook and Twitter apps to read posts and tweets on your smartphone has become second nature.

Even with over 615,000 apps available in the Apple App Store, 430,000 in Google Play and 70,000 in the Windows Phone Marketplace, it still may be a challenge to find apps to meet your professional and personal needs. Many apps feature the same or similar functionality, leaving you with too many options and not enough time to compare and test. You will likely just go with the most popular option, assuming that if it is good enough for millions of users, it must be pretty good and worth downloading.

Among these very popular downloads are social apps. Instagram, for example, is incredibly popular and is dominating the photo-sharing market. It features high-quality filters and a few social media functions such as being able to comment on photos and “follow” friends. In April, Facebook purchased this social app for \$1 billion.

In recent months, two video sharing apps, Socialcam and Viddy, have gained momentum and have outpaced Instagram in monthly active users. Both are on pace to become the “Instagram of video.”

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Clients are beginning to network with agents and brokers via Facebook and Twitter, embracing the value that social media provides their businesses. Many social media-based apps can enhance those interactions. Wondering how a social video can help you get the word out about benefits? Well, Socialcam and Viddy are two options that can assist you in doing just that, efficiently and with ease. Here’s a quick look at what they have to offer.



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Socialcam

Socialcam is a free mobile video application that enables you to share unlimited length videos, incorporate custom filters, themes and soundtracks, tag and/or follow other Socialcam members, comment on videos and “like” videos by giving them a red heart. Users can make their videos public or adjust the privacy settings for each video as they see fit. Videos can be shared via Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, email or SMS text-messaging. Videos you view and share can be posted automatically to your Facebook timeline. This less-than-two-year-old company was purchased by Autodesk for \$60 million in July and, in partnership with The Washington Post, provided coverage of the 2012 Summer Olympics. Currently, there are 75 million Socialcam users, 13 million of whom have installed the app on their smartphones.

Viddy

Viddy is another free social video app. It enables you to share 15-second videos and incorporate production “Packs,” which are downloadable video effects and background music that can be added to videos. Viddy is in the process of adding more celebrity production packs and premium packs that will enable longer video lengths and introduce more video filters and effects for a fee. Viddy allows users to tag and follow other Viddy members, comment on and “like” videos and identify favorites. Users can also adjust the privacy settings for each video as they see fit. Videos can be shared via Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Tumblr, blogs, email or SMS text-messaging. Quite a few celebrities use Viddy and when one in particular, Mark Zuckerberg, posted a video of his dog, it created quite a bit of speculation that Facebook would purchase Viddy. Currently, there are approximately 27 million Viddy users.

Many businesses are now utilizing Socialcam and Viddy. But is social video right for your business?

Naturally, it is important to be where your clients are, so if you are already networking with them via Facebook and Twitter, a social video would be an additional touch-point in forming and maintaining those relationships. If you decide to develop a social video, keep in mind that most viewers are not looking for an info-



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mercial. Most videos on Socialcam are between 60 and 90 seconds in length. Depending on your message, a video on Viddy may be a bit of a challenge, as you will need to be succinct, with just 15 seconds to communicate.

Contests, testimonials and calls to action are just a few ways that you could use social video. The goal isn't solely to become viral, but to communicate effectively to your audience. They need to walk away with a clear understanding of your key message or call to action. Your approach can be educational or even entertaining to gain the viewer's interest, but refrain from gimmicks so you can maintain interest over time.

Of course, it is important to maintain your reputation online. So remember that your reputation in social media isn't solely based on what you post, but also on what others post about you. Make sure that the content that you are posting maintains the strong, positive online presence that you have worked diligently to establish offline too.

Online videos are undeniably popular. According to the three-month Alexa traffic rankings, YouTube is the third most visited website in the world. With 1 trillion views in 2011, it is safe to assume that your clients and potential clients are viewing videos on YouTube.

Creating your own videos can add a serious punch to your client and prospect communications. Bringing videos into the social media realm via an app provides a simple way for you to share, and for others to view and share your messages, ultimately strengthening both online and offline relationships. So if social video is right for you and your clients, get out your smart phones and get those cameras rolling! **FIU**



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