- MODULE 1: SIMPLE VIDEOS -

VIDEO CREATION - ANIMOTO

If you're brand new to video marketing and have never uploaded anything to YouTube, the first step is to create your own simple video. Animoto is a great place to start - it's a web-based software application allowing you to create your own short videos using images and text of your choice.

Animoto comes in a basic free version, as well as a paid subscription offering lots of extra features. The free version allows you to create videos of up to 30 seconds in length, with plenty of different templates to choose from.

Videos created with the free version will include an 'animoto' watermark, so if you want to remove this you'll have to upgrade to the paid version. This costs $8/month when paid annually, or $16 for a single month. There's no watermark, and no limit to the length of your videos. It also offers a much larger range of templates, as well as higher quality and HD options.

To get going, simply click 'create video' then upload your choice of images from your desktop. You can input any text you'd like to accompany the images. Next, click 'preview' and wait while the magic happens.

Once video is completed, you can edit, make an optional upgrade to HD, or simply download it ready for use. When you're happy with the results, you can upload it to YouTube, and start ranking it.

Getting started really is that simple!

If you only have to make a few videos, paying $16 for a one-month subscription is the way to go. If you plan to make more videos over a longer time period, the $8/month annual account may well offer you better value for money.

USING FIVERR & SOURCEMARKET FOR CREATING ANIMOTO-STYLE VIDEOS

Don't want the hassle of learning to create videos for yourself? Time to outsource it to a freelancer. There are a variety of places where you can track one down, but two good options are fiverr.com and sourcemarket.com.

To get started, go to fiverr.com and type 'animoto' in the search bar. You'll see a huge list of freelancers offering to create animoto-style videos for you. Each will offer a slightly different service, so be sure to carefully read what each is offering.

When choosing a freelancer, be sure to check the ratings! If someone has 752 buyers and a 5-point rating, odds are they're a safe bet. Reading a few individual reviews should help you get a feel for the quality of the service.

Average wait time is 7 days, so you may have to wait a little bit for your video. Some freelancers offer a rush-service for a little extra cash.

If you only need a couple of videos to produce, you can't beat this approach. It saves time, and offers excellent value for money!

Another good option is sourcemarket.com. It's similar to fiverr, but lends itself particularly well to more specialized jobs, which is very useful if - for example - SEO is a big consideration.

Just make sure your chosen freelancer has good reviews and can produce the video in the timeline that you want. For creating your first video, that's it!

- MODULE 2 -
CREATING YOUR SCRIPT

WRITING YOUR SCRIPT

Your script is the most important part of your video. This is your chance to engage your potential customers, so it's crucial that it says what you need it to say about your company.

When you're sitting down to write your script, there are a few things to keep in mind. This may sound obvious, but make sure you really think about the person you're writing the script for! Often people get caught up in selling their product or service, and forget about the actual person who will be watching the video. Put yourself in the mind of this person - how do they feel? What are their pain-points? Think carefully about how you can relate to them.

There are a few basic questions that customers always ask themselves when evaluating a potential service provider, so be sure to always hit these points:

- **Can you relate to me?**
  If someone visits your site offering - for example - water, fire and mold damage restoration, chances are they've just had a pretty traumatic experience! By making yourself a source of comfort for someone who's in a desperate situation, you're showing them you understand their plight, and understanding a problem is an essential first step to solving it.

- **How do I know you know what you're doing?**
  There's a lot of choice out there, so you have to convince potential customers that you're the right person for the job. One way people evaluate competence is by longevity and experience, so if you've been in business for 17 years, then say so! Potential clients need to know that you have authority in your chosen field, so use this opportunity assure them that you can take care of their needs.

- **My problem is unique - how do I know you can help me?**
  If you can tell a customer there's no problem out in the field that you have not encountered and have not been able to fix, they're going to feel reassured. And if they feel reassured, you're more likely to get their business. If you address the less obvious questions that customers never think to ask, you're showing them that you really understand their situation. This immediately makes you more of an authority, and makes a strong case for them to choose you over the competition.

- **What if I don't like what you're offering?**
  Make it as compelling as possible for this person to pick up the phone and call you! If you can back up your work with a 'no hassle guarantee' then you're making yourself a zero-risk proposition. That means more phone calls, and more business.

OUTSOURCING YOUR SCRIPT (FIVERR.COM)

At the very least, try to write the first draft of the video script yourself! The act of doing this will help to get you into the marketing mindset, allowing you to better connect with your target audience. It will also help you to get a better grip on the whole video-production process. Who knows - you may even be pleasantly surprised by the results! If not, you can always take it to a writer and ask them to touch it up.

If you'd prefer to outsource the whole thing to a freelancer, there are plenty of options, but two good sites for tracking down scriptwriters are fiverr.com and guru.com.

Go on fiverr and type in 'video script'. As ever when choosing a freelancer, check out reviews! You want to make sure you're dealing with a trusted supplier who provides good work. If you can find this at a great price, so much the better.

To gauge the word count of your script, you have to think about the length of your video. For conversion to rank on google or YouTube, around 2 minutes is optimum, which translates to around 250 words. Any longer than this and you'll risk losing the interest of your viewers. If you want to play around with your word count, you can find a free words-to-minutes calculator at speechinminutes.com.

Writers offer a range of services, from touching up an existing script to creating the whole thing from scratch. More in-depth options may also be offered - some freelancers will personally analyze your product and website to extract the best info for your video, or analyze the market to make sure your video will make you stand out from your competitors. All these services will come at an additional cost.

If you want these more in-depth services, fiverr is a particularly good place to find freelancers who offer them.

Once you've decided on a writer, make sure you give them detailed instructions. Include any key points you want to highlight, as well as any keywords (there's no need to repeat these a bunch of times - once is enough with keywords). Make sure they have the correct contact details to use in the call to action at the end of your video.

OUTSOURCING YOUR SCRIPT (GURU.COM)

Another great site for tracking down freelancers is guru.com, which is particularly good for finding high quality writers. The costs are typically a bit higher than fiverr, but you're more likely to find a writer with whom you can build a lasting relationship. In the long run, this will save you time and make the process a lot easier.

Unlike many of the other outsourcing sites, guru works on a per-hour basis. This makes it easier for you to negotiate for any further work you might have, or to include any more specific requests.

As before, type in 'video script' and see what comes up. You'll be able to check out some examples of a writer's work - watch a few videos they've already made, and - as ever - read the reviews! A writer may not have reviews on guru.com, but that's ok - as long as they can point you in the direction of another trusted site on which they have positive reviews, that's verification enough.

Once you've selected your writer, it's time to submit information for your script. As with the other sites, make sure you include all the relevant information in advance. If a writer has to do any extra research, you'll incur some additional costs.

If you need multiple videos, it may be a good idea to pay the writer to do the research, then use that same person for all your videos. This way, they'll already have a good grasp of your company, which will help them to write a great script.

Don't want to trawl through the site for suitable writers? A great alternative is to post your job and have the freelancers come to you! This works really well as a filter, since you'll only have people contacting you that offer the services you've specifically requested.

If you go this route, include a brief description of the job, and ask for any relevant samples. Don't include any contact details or specific information at this point.

If you need multiple scripts writing, it's a good idea to mention this up front. If a writer knows that successful completion of a script will lead to additional gigs, it'll make the job more enticing and attract individuals who are keen to develop an ongoing relationship. Don't say this unless you actually mean it though! Remember, the aim is to develop a good relationship with your writer, making the process easier for you in the future.

Once you've posted your job, sit back and wait for the bids to come in! You'll also have the opportunity to negotiate so you can get a deal both you and your writer are happy with.

OUTSOURCING YOUR SCRIPT (PEOPLEPERHOUR.COM)

Another good option for outsourcing your script is peopleperhour.com. Typical costs are a little higher than fiverr, but it tends to offer a higher quality of people.

First up, go to 'buy', then search for 'script writers'. On this site, you'll notice they refer to 'hourlies', but this doesn't necessarily mean you're hiring by the hour - it's just a general term this site uses to mean 'gig'!

Check the details of the service people are offering - these will vary from writer to writer, so make sure you know what you're getting and what the costs will be in advance. Also check the delivery time to make sure you'll get your script when you need it.

Always check the ratings! And remember that when evaluating a freelancer's ratings, you should also take into account the number of sales they have. If someone has a high number of sales and a high rating, you know you're in safe hands.

The process is the same as hiring as with fiverr.com or guru.com. Select a writer, contact them to ask for samples, then negotiate to make sure you're happy with the service and you know exactly how much it will cost you.

- MODULE 3: ANIMATED VIDEOS -

ANIMATED VIDEO CREATION INTRODUCTION

While a simple slideshow video with music and pictures will convert pretty well, a whiteboard or animated video is a far superior option. Anything with an actual person speaking directly to the audience will convert a hundred times better!

These videos are a lot more complex than basic animoto-style videos, with a lot more moving parts. Again: if you're brand new to making videos and have never had a YouTube channel, start by making a simple animoto video like we showed you in module 1. Once you've got this down, you can move on to creating your own whiteboard video, or you can opt to outsource it to a freelancer.

When it comes to your video, what you say and how you say it is very important. You really need to grab the attention of your potential customers! Remember that

people are watching your video because they have a problem and they want to know if you have the answer, so it's best to keep things short and to the point.

The idea is to get them to pick up the phone and make that call, and if your video is too long, they'll lose interest and move on. Generally speaking, around 2 to 3 minutes is a good rough guide.

VOICEOVER

Once you've got your script together, the next step is getting a voiceover. You can do this yourself, but it's not recommended - the professional touch counts for a lot here!

The process of arranging a voiceover is pretty simple. Go to a trusted site such as fiverr or peopleperhour, type in 'voice over' then sift through the results. For voiceovers, fiverr is a good option because you can get great quality work for a very good price.

Make sure you listen to plenty of samples - the quality really varies. Some people are great for getting into character or doing accents, but maybe aren't so great when it comes to reading a script. You really need someone who can read a script well!

Rates are often charged per 100-word gig, so pay close attention to the length of your script. Even if you go only one word over, a voiceover artist may charge you for a whole extra gig. People are often very strict about this, so it pays to be careful with your wordcount.

Carefully check the exact details of the services being offered - it varies from individual to individual. You'll see people quoting for a voice-only recording of your script, or they may provide music for a little extra. Some people will offer to sync their voiceover with your video, which is a great option if your video is a particularly important one. Chances are it'll be well worth the additional cost.

To give you some ideas, here are a couple of examples of people we've used regularly ourselves. Both provide a fast service, and do an excellent job.

- Our go-to choice for American English female voice

- Our go-to choice for an American English male voice:

When ordering voiceovers, be sure to provide all the relevant information, and make sure you clearly explain exactly what your video is for. You want the voiceover to be a smooth as possible, so if your script includes any tricky or unfamiliar words that your voiceover artist might mispronounce or trip over, be sure to spell them out phonetically, paying particular attention to any unusual names.

You might want to include an example video, giving your voiceover artist an idea of how you want your script to be read. Most will welcome this kind of guidance, since it makes it easier for them to provide exactly what you want. That keeps both of you happy!

If you've already decided on your soundtrack, give it to your voiceover artist so they can pace themselves to the background music. And make sure you include any specific instructions. For example, you can have them emphasize sections highlighted in yellow, or read sections highlighted in blue slowly and with concern in their voice. You can give instructions on pacing the script by inserting the word 'pause' at key points.

You may want to discuss your video in person with your voiceover artist over skype. Or, you may want them to proof read it for you in advance to make sure it sounds right when read out loud. Again, if your video is really important, these options may well be worth the extra cost.

When you order the gig, be sure you know exactly what you're going to pay, and make sure you listen to a few different samples to be sure you like the voice and accent of your speaker.

CREATING YOUR VIDEO

Now you have the script and the voiceover, it's time to move on to creating your video! If you decide to tackle this job yourself, there are some great software options to help you along the way. Here are a few of the best:

- powtoons.com This allows you to drag and drop characters and animation, and add script of your choice. It also offers a great range of styles and templates. It's very easy to use, with plenty of in-app tutorials to help you through the process. It's free to use, but you'll have to upgrade to a paid version to remove the powtoons watermark.

- sparkol.com - Sparkol pioneered the concept of hand-drawn whiteboard videos, and it's still leading the pack, with ease of use and unbeatable image quality. We've personally been using it for years, and it keeps getting better and better. It costs $20/month to use, or you can pay an $800 lifetime charge, which is probably the best route to go if you plan to make a lot of videos. The service includes some great free music tracks, and the whole package makes the process of producing a great video really simple.

- videomakerfx.com - Roughly speaking, this is a combination of the previous two examples, allowing you to produce all types of videos: slideshow powerpoint, whiteboard, animoto-style videos, powtoon-style videos... the list goes on! The advantage is that it offers a broader range of possible styles, but the drawback is that the quality isn't quite as good as more specialized

options like sparkol. Considering that it's a one-time buy of $67, it's pretty good value for money.

- camtasia.com - This is a more in-depth package with a lot of extra features catering for more advanced users. As well as the options offered by the previous examples, it allows features such as screen capture. This is the software we used to make the videos you're checking out right now!

OUTSOURCING VIDEO CREATION

Producing your own video takes time and effort. If don't have the inclination to do it yourself, or simply want the reassurance of a more professional touch, you're going to want to outsource it to a freelancer. Fortunately, the process is just as quick and easy as it was for your script. Two great options are fiverr and peopleperhour. Prices will generally be a little higher with peopleperhour, but the quality of service providers tends to be a little higher.

To get started, go to fiverr.com and type in 'whiteboard videos'. As ever, you'll see a variety of prices, with varying skills and services.

Many people will be using the one of the same software packages we've just showed you, but some will be more creative than others. Watch a few examples to get a feel for the differing quality and style of an individual provider, then pick one whose approach you like. And as always, read the reviews!

For a high quality video, prices can be around $50 per 15 seconds, so the costs can mount up pretty quickly. If super high quality isn't such a concern for you, there are plenty of lower cost options available.

Before you book a gig, clarify exactly what is being provided. Be sure to check for any upcharges, such as syncing your voiceover or adding music, and clarify exactly how many seconds you'll be getting for what price. The process will be much smoother if you have all these details settled up front.

If you only need one or two videos, booking a couple of one-off gigs is the way to go. If you plan on making substantially more videos, you might want to look at developing an ongoing relationship with an outsourcer. This may help you get a better rate, and the mutual familiarity will make the entire process easier. If this is the route you go down, then sites like upwork.com can be a great place to look.