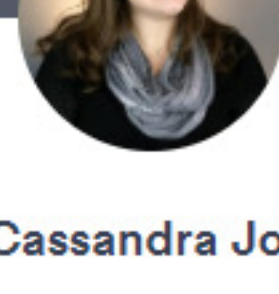


Using Vidyard to Boost CTRs by 800% and Improve the ROI of our Events



By Cassandra Jowett

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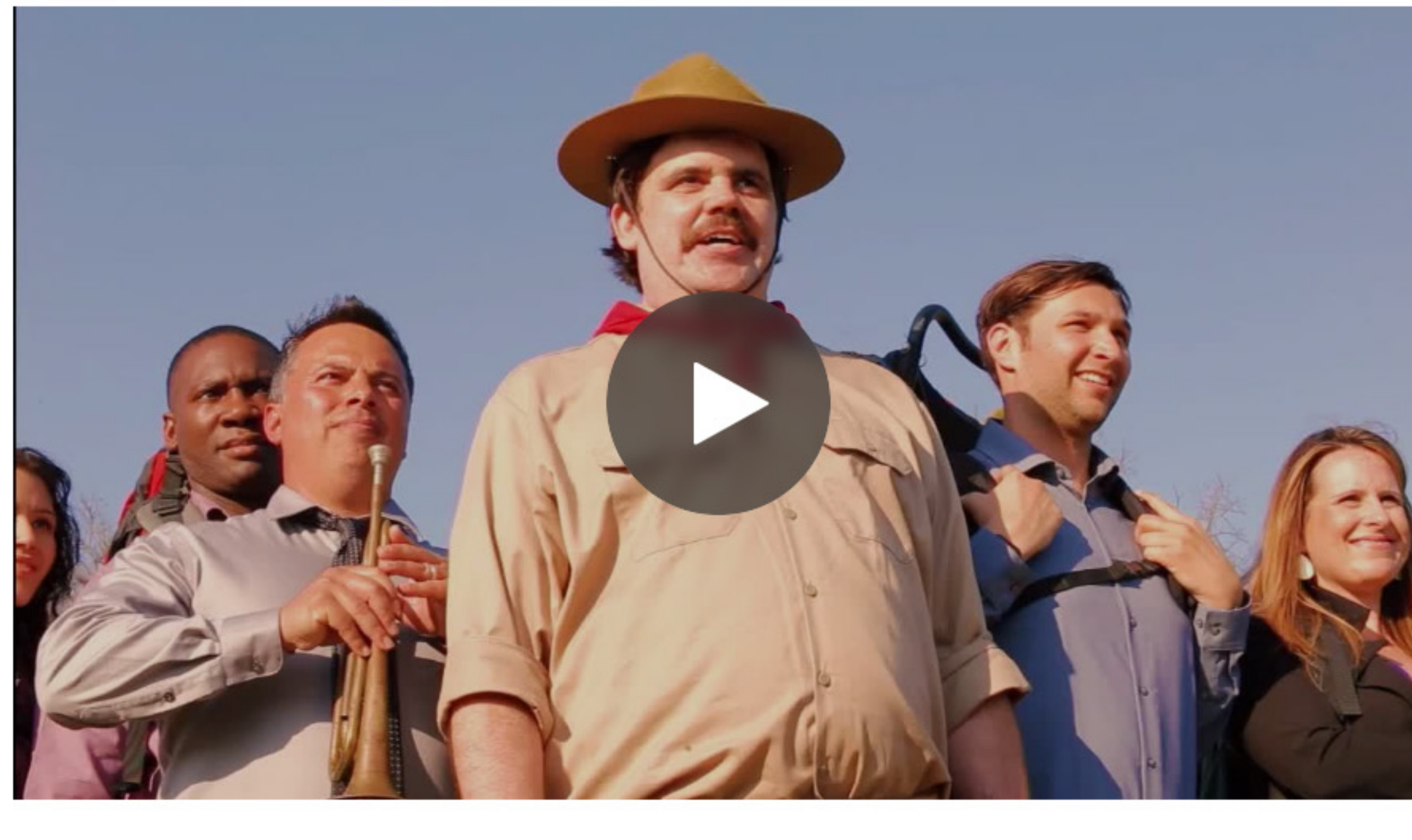
Breaking through all the marketing noise is hard enough on its own, but when your audience is other marketers, you have your work cut out for you. How do you engage people who spend every hour of their workday thinking through the same problem? We can create blog posts, ads, and case studies to grab the attention of our prospects, but when they know all the tricks of the trade, creativity is key.

At Influitive, we've worked for the past five years to build a whole new category of marketing—advocate marketing—to help B2B companies ignite growth through the voices of their customers. Our platform gives marketers the ability to discover, nurture and mobilize their customer base to reach a wider audience, accelerate the sales pipeline, and improve customer engagement. It's my job to educate our prospects on what advocate marketing is, why it's important, and why they need it.

In 2015, Influitive created a new industry event focused on advocacy, customer engagement, and experience. We called it Advocamp. The first year was a huge success and we wanted the 2016 event to be even bigger; our goal was to more than triple attendance. But it wasn't going to be easy to get the attention of so many more B2B marketers and convince them to attend our virtually unknown event. Oh, and did I mention that we only had three months to get everyone registered? No sweat.

We had our normal promotion vehicles—the website, email, content, and social ad campaigns—but we knew to stand out in a sea of events that look more or less the same on paper, we were going to have to get creative.

Enter Camp Counselor Buck.



Show, Don't Tell

To convince people to attend a brand new marketing event instead of or in addition to the dozens of other events out there, we couldn't just tell them Advocamp was the best conference ever. We had to show them. We had to make them feel something.

When you have to grab people's attention quickly, and don't have the luxury of a 1,500-word post to explain the awesomeness of your event, the best tool to accomplish this is video. It can help build that emotional foundation, and it's much easier to be funny, sad or joyful through video than almost any other form of content. But sometimes it's also a lot harder to produce.

This is where our video partners come in. We had worked with a video production company called Sparksight on many video campaigns in the past, including some basic Advocamp commercials in 2015. Among these Advocamp promo videos was a camp counsellor character named Buck—think B2B marketing meets summer camp with a large helping of physical comedy. We called these videos Buckshots.

While the early Buckshot videos from 2015 were super funny and people seemed to enjoy them, we could only use them for brand awareness, which is marketing speak for “we have no way of measuring the impact of this.” We made them, put them online, and hoped they would take off. I'm sure you can guess that they didn't. They got a few hundred views each. But we weren't done with video. We realized we had to put significant distribution efforts behind them just like any other piece of content we produced.

Although we couldn't tie registrations and hard ROI directly to these original Buckshots, we did get a lot of positive feedback from our colleagues, partners, customers, and other Advocamp attendees. Marketers attend so many events every year, and often they feel like just one big advertisement. We heard, however, that we had hit the mark when it came to instilling a different kind of emotional impact associated with our event. It made a promise about the event experience that stood out from the competition. More importantly, attendees told us we delivered on that promise a few months later at Advocamp.

When 2016 rolled around and we set that stretch goal to register nearly 4X the number of Advocamp attendees from the previous year, we knew we couldn't produce videos that merely entertained. We had to convert. We had to change our strategy if we hoped to come even close to our goal, so we started investigating ways to make an engaging medium like video turn into an ROI-driving, seat-filling tactic.

A few months before we started promoting Advocamp 2016, we started using video marketing platform Vidyard to host all of our video content. The cool thing about Vidyard is that it integrates with your marketing automation platform (in our case, Marketo) to track and measure the impact of your video content. Video can be more costly and time consuming to produce than any other type of content, so it's critical to tie those investments back to sales pipeline and revenue.

Around that time, Vidyard also introduced some innovative new functionality that allowed marketers to personalize video campaigns in the same way we personalize emails.

Personalization

Dale Carnegie said, “A person's name is to him or her the sweetest and most important sound in any language.” When someone uses your name in conversation, you feel respected and important. While our previous email campaigns used this tactic—Hi {first_name}—it was lacking in our videos.

The first batch of Buckshot videos in 2015 were all about Advocamp and how much fun the conference would be. But they didn't put the viewer there, right next to Buck, experiencing the fun for themselves. With Vidyard, we could easily create hundreds of personalized video invitations without having to shoot hundreds of unique Buckshots.

By now, you've probably seen these types of personalized videos; they usually involve a character holding up a piece of paper with your name on it. But we couldn't have Buck in the middle of the woods holding up some random paper, so we stuck with the theme and inserted the personalized text field into a merit badge sash (check out the video below to see). Now all we had to do was get these videos in front of the right people.



Delivery

In the past, if we wanted to email personalized videos to folks in our database, we'd have to create thousands of unique videos and thumbnail images for each of the recipients and insert them one by one into the emails. This is just way too many steps. With Vidyard, all we needed to do was send them our list, and through the integration between Vidyard and Marketo, we could automatically send unique thumbnail images with a link that would open their personalized invitation—all housed and hosted on Vidyard's platform.

Results

Our previous Advocamp promotions (email, social, and through our customer AdvocateHub) yielded modest results: 16.1% open rate, 0.7% click-through rate and 4.6% click-to-open rate. The personalized video campaign crushed those numbers:

- 29% open rate
- 5.5% click-through rate
- 18.7% click-to-open rate

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The click-through rate was 8X higher and the click-to-open rate 4X higher than our other campaigns!

Learnings

These numbers told us that clearly way more people were seeing our message, engaging with our emails, and then following through to watch the video. But these metrics don't mean much unless we could put people in the seats. Luckily, we did that too. While we fell slightly short of our ambitious goal of 4X attendance, we tripled our attendance from the previous year. And we learned a ton.

With most email campaigns, you work hard to draft a catchy subject line, engaging copy, and a compelling CTA. Then you send it out and...crickets. Or, if you do hear anything back, it's almost always negative: “I don't know how I got on this list!” “Take me off!” But with the personalized video campaign we received an overwhelming amount of positive feedback. People loved their videos and asked us how we pulled it off—and these were our fellow marketers! People who know all the tricks of the trade and spend all day everyday looking for new marketing magic. That's when we knew had achieved our goal of conveying the emotional spirit of the conference.

That special feeling and “magic” of innovation was now associated with Influitive's brand, which was something that would've been near impossible to achieve through traditional marketing plays. It also laid a great foundation for our future Advocamp marketing efforts.

In addition to the personalized video invitations, Sparksight also recorded all the sessions at the event. These were first available to attendees and then to those who were unable to attend. These session recordings gave us a soft-touch to follow up with the people who didn't attend, and to this day one of our most watched videos (out the more than 500 we have hosted on Vidyard) is Daniel Pink's keynote on “Advocate Marketing and the Science of Motivation.

If you're considering adding video to your marketing campaigns, make sure to give yourself plenty of lead time. Video takes a while to get right, and it's not something you want to rush. Also, one thing we didn't do this last time that we're hungry to get into for the next campaign is testing. A/B test your subject lines and email segments to better understand what content resonates most with each customer segment. In addition, video isn't cheap, so optimize to ensure you're getting the biggest return on your investment. And finally, find a trusted video expert to help you through each step of the process—you and your audience will be happy you did.