

Live Social Video: An Inevitable Marketing Channel

Marketers have to **move at the pace of the consumer** and that means mastering disruptive marketing channels. Today's disruptor, and one that deserves special attention, is **live social video**. As the culmination of many of the best communication channels and technologies, live social video is changing the way brands communicate with their audiences.

A Shift In Marketing Let's Go

In this whitepaper, we unpack what is the **new live** and why it is the latest 'must-use' marketing channel. Rather than taking a wait-and-see approach, you'll learn that if you're not live, you're late. Brands like IBM, Mayo Clinic, GE and SolidWorks have proven that regardless of industry, your brand can experience success with this innovative marketing tool.

Thank you for downloading this whitepaper. We're excited for you to dig in.

Let's go!

The Experience Era of Marketing

The Continuing Evolution of Brand Experience

What works for your brand today—and what will thrive tomorrow and next year—has changed...and just keeps on changing. New consumer behaviors and expectations, fueled by emerging technologies, are pushing marketers to experiment, iterate, and acclimate to new paradigms, at an ever-increasing rate. Those that embrace and adapt to change will be the ones who succeed.

Moving at the Speed of the Consumer

As a brand in constant search for new and better ways to cultivate loyal customers, your goal must be to meet them on their terms—because that's what today's consumer demands. We see this trend across three major pillars of most brand engagement strategies.

Communities: Customers as Co-Creators

With the introduction of digital tools and social media, a customer's desire to be part of a community has amplified. By nature communities foster sharing, which in turn helps amplify a brand's message. Thus, brands are trying harder than ever to resonate with these communities on whichever digital medium they exist. The successful ones are those that can associate themselves with topics and values much bigger than the brand itself.

Content Marketing: Stand out Among the Noise

Content is king, and often the primary way for brands to deliver new types of value. But content distribution and consumption is changing, often at warp speed. Consumers can access information with the swipe of a finger, putting brands under a microscope. Great content can keep audiences happily engaged, bad content can live on indefinitely, forever tarnishing a brand's reputation. Brands are now expected to serve audiences by educating or entertaining on issues that matter in their universe, even if it's only tangentially related to the brand.

Live Experiences: Technology Enhancing Real Time Engagements

Brands are facing unrelenting pressure to reach customers in innovative ways. Live experiences go beyond the screens, ads, and general information overload—breaking through the clutter and reaching customers on an intimate level. The hyper-relevancy of live experiences, and their ability to ignite all five senses, have kept live experiences top of mind for marketers in the digital era. With technology and social in the mix, today's event landscape is shifting; brands must innovate to ensure their experiences resonate.

Today's consumer is hyper-connected and fueled by the digital economy. To stay relevant brands must move at the speed of the consumer and keep pace with their dynamic mindset.

Successful brands are aligning their offerings by:

- Delighting customers with new or innovative content
- Granting insider status by sharing behind-the-scenes information
- Listening to the consumers' voice, and amplifying their message
- Fostering connections between customers, the brand, and like-minded peers

The Solution Under Inspection: Live Social Video

At Cramer, when we get our hands on new tech we dig right in. We get to know it, and experiment with all its capabilities to see what's working and what isn't. Once we've mastered its use, we catalog it, noting which of these new technologies, solutions, and channels hold the most promise for our clients.

The subject of our most recent review —and this first **"Let's Go"** endeavor is **live social video for your brand.**

The Value of Live Social Video

The numbers confirm what you've likely already noticed yourself: **The Internet is rapidly becoming video.**

And video is rapidly becoming a live-transmission phenomenon.

Live + Social + Video: A New Communication Channel

Though it's in the early days, platforms centered on live video are proliferating. [Periscope](#), [Instagram Live](#), [Holyvent](#), [Crowdcast](#), [Snapchat](#), and of course, [Facebook Live](#) are all streaming tools that are becoming widely popular among customers and brands alike. Facebook's CEO Mark Zuckerberg predicts that live social video will greatly impact the way the world communicates:

"Live is like having a TV camera in your pocket. Anyone with a phone now has the power to broadcast to anyone in the world. This is a big shift in how we communicate and it's going to create new opportunities for people to come together." [Mark Zuckerberg, Facebook Post](#)

When "anyone with a phone" has the power to broadcast to anyone in the world, the necessity of a clear signal is more important than ever. Zuckerberg's contention that live video is creating a host of new opportunities is surely true. But for a brand, opportunity can often lead to anxiety. With limited time and budget, the sheer number of platforms available can induce decision fatigue, or "channel exhaustion."

It's time to dismiss your hesitations and join the movement because, like it or not, live social video is here to stay.

An Equation with Three Known Parts: Live + Social + Video

Although the idea of live video streaming is far from new, integrating the medium with live experiences, social media, and mobile devices pushes it to the forefront of marketing.

In practical terms, live social video is simply the packaging of three components: Live + Social + Video.

Taken independently, we know a great deal about how to harness the value of each of these tools. By breaking down the elements and taking a step back from the hype, it's easy to see how combining these elements delivers maximum value to today's marketers.

The Immediacy (and Human Touch) of Live

We live in a world of immediacy. We engage with news as it's happening. FOMO has been added to the Oxford Dictionary. By today's standards: if it isn't live, it's late.

Audiences—and humans in general—increasingly crave experience. We're all looking for the X-factor of the live experience. Or, as Cramer calls it—the Alchemy of a Moment. In the ideal moment brands are immediate, relatable, and contextually relevant. It makes brands and the people they represent, accessible. This accessibility breeds familiarity. It taps into your senses; changes how you feel. It builds trust, expands relationships, and makes for great memories.

Technology is advancing to the point where people don't need to leave their homes as often as they once did. But, when people do venture out, it's more of an event than before—making it the perfect scenario for brands to establish positive brand awareness.

- Since 1987, consumer spending on live experiences and events increased 70%¹
- In 2016, 78% of millennials reported that they would rather spend money on a desirable experience than a desirable thing¹
- According to a Harris study, 69% of respondents said they believe attending live experiences helps them connect better with friends and people around the world¹

At Cramer, we believe nothing can impact your brand perception like a live experience. And when pairing the elements of live video with social media, the value is transferable. But, regardless of the medium, the live opportunity has to be:

Authentic

Interactive

Contextual

Hyper-relevant

These value drivers are why live channels—events, conferences, activations, webinars, customer service—are such highly impactful brand touchpoints.

The Advocacy (and Reach) of Social

Social media, once seen as a tool for social interactions, has now become a widely valued marketing channel. With over **2.3 billion active social media users in the world today**—each with an average of five different social media accounts—social is everywhere. Because of this proliferation, these channels have become a way for brands to meet customers where they are. Through sharing, commenting, and content creation, social networks can amplify a brand's message quickly, and on a global scale. Because customers value peer recommendations, brands should utilize social to foster positive brand sentiment. And the near instant distribution enables them to stay relevant in a constantly changing world.

On the back-end, content performance can be measured and analyzed through audience assessment tools, providing even more valuable insight for brands.

The pure nature of social can provide unique value to the Live + Social+ Video equation:

- People are already apt to share, and will continue to share content that is relevant to them, and enhances their personal brand
- Social gives insight that helps brands analyze and adapt
- Social allows you to target your customers where they are already interacting

Customers sit at the heart of social and drive conversations that can be extremely valuable for a brand. By incorporating social, live video becomes even more dynamic, interactive, and drives more value for today's marketers.

The Power (and Dominance) of Video

There is no medium that tells a story better than video. People turn to video to learn new things, be entertained, and communicate with others—it's rapidly becoming a powerful part of all our daily lives. More than half of marketers across the world believe video has the best ROI. According to [Forbes, 2017 will be the year of video marketing](#).

Because digital is now widely adopted and its distribution is effortless, video has become a primary source of content consumption online:

- 78% of people watch videos online every week²
- 96% of B2B companies are planning to use video in content marketing²
- 82% of all consumer internet traffic will be from video by 2020³

Blending social with video allows viewers to become co-creators of a brand's story; putting greater emphasis on the message the brand is trying to share. Through real time feedback, customers can positively (or negatively) alter the video's message in a matter of seconds.

With live video popping up on almost every social platform, its value is clear:

- Video enables brands to tell an emotional story
- Video content promotes brand recall
- Video content is highly shareable
- Video performs well on virtually all of today's screen-centric smart devices (Sorry Alexa!)

Our Belief:

When Done Well, the Sum is Greater Than its Parts.

In practical terms, we as marketers are familiar with each of these components. And, by bringing together these three already successful, compelling media, live social video is an inevitable marketing channel. A tool for significant engagement with your audience.

It packages the immediacy of live presentation, the reach and engagement of social, and the sensory impact of video. As a communication channel, it's

not just a broadcast tool, but a shared brand-client experience. It is as close to direct one-to-one, face-to-face human interaction as one can get, digitally. While providing great reach, live social video offers both intimacy and scale.

Your audience wants novelty, yes. But more importantly, they want experiences of personal significance, and they want them first hand. So, you want to get there first.

And, to borrow some wisdom from an earlier era, you want to get there first, but first you want to get it right.

The brands who are best prepared to strategically plan, professionally present their live social streaming events, then actively listen and rapidly respond to their audiences and partners, will be the ones who benefit the most.

Overcoming Common Challenges:

We're Too Boring—Who'd Watch? We're Too Regulated—We Can't Risk It.

If you represent a brand from a traditional, staid, or regulated industry—or one where even the simplest of company statements goes through multiple reviews—going live can feel like too risky a proposition.

Worried live social video doesn't fit with your brand image?

Just because you don't represent a sleek global consumer brand doesn't mean you're too 'boring' for live social video content.

In fact, live social video could be the opportunity your brand has been looking for to resonate with today's digital-first mindset.

Every brand has a story to tell. At one point or another your brand was built from deep rooted guiding principles and propelled by someone's passion. Brands that may not feel inherently 'sexy' enough for live video may just have to dig a little deeper to craft their story.

Utilizing live social video doesn't have to be intimidating. Here are some ways B2B brands can tell a compelling story on live social video, regardless of industry:

Tap Into Social

See what your audience is talking about on social. Let their opinions and interests do the leg work for your content generation. With social listening, you are guaranteed to find a topic or story that resonates.

Go Beyond the Product

Utilize live social video to show your audience something they wouldn't expect from your brand. Product demos can seem 'salesy' and may not find traction in the social-sphere. Talking about company values, providing a sneak peek behind the brand (office/factory) or gamifying the conversation with giveaways can give your brand an unexpected social edge.



Spotlight on Healthcare

We sat down with Julie Walker, EVP, Healthcare at Cramer for some tips on how brands in the healthcare industry can utilize live social video.

Clinical Trial Recruitment

If you're a healthcare company, then there's a good chance you're familiar with the drawn out and costly process of recruiting patients for clinical trials. Through social targeting, live social video can help healthcare brands get in front of both potential patients and physicians to boost participation in clinical trials.

Patient Stories & Customer Testimonials

Patients want to hear from other patients. It's more authentic and more effective than pushing out a corporate or product related message. Utilize live social video to share patient stories or customer experiences to add a human element to your brand.

Experiment

Some of the greatest value derived from live social video is the direct, unfiltered feedback from a targeted customer group. Utilize this aspect of social to drive content experimentation. Tell different stories, and test out new topics to see what sticks. Your audience is vocal on social and they won't be shy to share their opinions.

Making it Work in Highly Regulated Industries

Regulated industries such as healthcare and finance are often maligned by the media and perceived as faceless, uncaring corporations. It is even more important for these types of brands to be seen in an authentic light. Yet another compelling reason to utilize live social video.

The un-edited, real time nature of live social video makes it one of the most authentic channels beyond face-to-face interactions.

Rather than seen as a risk, live social video is an opportunity for your brand to stay relevant and meet the needs of your customer in ways other marketing channels can't. Live social video still needs to fall within your brand's legal regulations, but keeping in touch with your legal team can keep things moving.

Here are some ways marketers in highly regulated industries can make a splash with live social video:

Employee Recruitment

Recruitment is always an expensive proposition. Live social video can be a cost-effective way to share an inside look at what it's like to work at your company. Feature an intern, a new employee, or an executive who worked his or her way up. Broadcasting a company lunch, an internal gathering, or holiday party is a great way to show the social side of your brand.

Charity Rides and Walks

Whether you're a brand that hosts charity events or an active participant in the community, live social video broadcasts the experience in real time reaching those who can't be there and amplifying your association with the cause.

Company Innovation

Every company says they're innovative, but what are you *doing* that is innovative? What next big challenge are you trying to solve? Take your audience for a walk through your lab, interview some of your employees, and share a story that your audience isn't used to hearing.

Behind the Scenes

Take your customers behind the scenes to see the inner workings of your hospital or finance trading floor. While stopping short of any 'secret sauce', show them that your approach is unique and there are actual people behind your brand who are passionate about their work.

What We're Seeing in Early Adoption

Live Social Video: It's not just for consumer brands.

As fun and inspiring as it is to watch the always-early consumer brand adopters—we wanted to spend time reviewing and learning from experimenters in more, shall we say, sober or restrained industries like technology, finance, and healthcare. While those may feel like surprising spaces, we think this collection helps illustrate our conclusion: Any brand can take advantage of Live + Social + Video.

GE

GE, traditionally known as a highly technical company, is taking a story telling approach to live social video that is proving to be effective for the brand.

“Part of our role on our team is to really put the brand in people's hands... We are less and less focused on our consumer products and more focused on telling our industrial story.”⁴

GE Digital Marketing Manager, Sydney Williams

Proving to be fearless adopters of new tech, Williams describes GE's social efforts as driven by a goal to be present in “interesting, relevant and entertaining ways.”

By incorporating live social video into their marketing strategy, GE is able to inject a human element into the highly technical brand.

“We're always trying to tell the full picture of the GE story, which is a complicated one, so any time we can talk about the various industries and variety of expertise and disciplines, we try to find unique and innovative ways to do that,”⁵

GE's Director of Innovation, Sam Olstein

Drone Week

GE first experimented with the idea of live social video with Drone Week on Periscope in 2015. The videos displayed a bird's eye view of GE's industrial facilities located across the country. The video effectively told the story about GE's presence in a variety of industries. The campaign received 20,000 viewers on Periscope. The following year, Drone Week 2016 took an audience behind the scenes at the Olympics Games in Rio de Janeiro on [Facebook Live](#) showing how GE and its technology helped to “power” the games.



“Drone Week allows us to showcase five different sites and five industries to give people a really cool perspective and peek at some of the stuff they don’t see often, but does have an impact on their lives.”⁵ **GE’s Director of Innovation, Sam Olstein**

What Worked

A Willingness to Experiment

GE’s willingness to experiment with live social video is evident by their lack of fear in non-traditional marketing mediums. Not only is it innovative that GE is tapping into live social video as a communication stream, but they utilized drones to capture their content—a truly cutting edge initiative.



The Emphasis on the Audience

GE’s strategy is centered around their customer base, viewing their audience as partners in their messaging and storytelling. GE focused on giving their audience an inside look at the company that they normally wouldn’t see, making the live video content more appealing and shareable. Olstein commented on the drone week video, “When you give people a peek behind the curtain, they fall in love with the company.”⁵

A Business-driven Purpose

GE utilized Drone Week as a way to attract new talent and advocate to younger generations. They wanted to inspire their potential future workforce. Because they are going after the same group of prospective hires as Facebook, Google, and Microsoft, they needed a more appealing way to reach this audience.



Where to Take it Next

While Drone Week was a success, it was not without its challenges. GE noted three things they learned from live streaming:

- Having a strong internet connection is crucial
- Technical aspects of the stream are highly important
- Speaker prep goes a long way, and it is important to make sure they are comfortable

As GE continues to expand on their live video strategy, it seems they will continue to focus on giving more control to viewers. Their current social video strategy includes Facebook, Snapchat, Periscope, and YouTube (to name a few) but they are continuously looking to expand as new tools surface. Overall, Olstein sums it up as wanting GE to be “discoverable wherever there is an audience.”⁵



Mayo Clinic

For over 150 years, people have trusted Mayo Clinic as their partner in healthcare. Their purpose for using social media is to facilitate direct contact with patients, and to control their story, rather than relying on journalists and other media outlets.

The healthcare sector is highly regulated to protect people's privacy. As such, venturing into social media, where almost nothing is private, seems risky. But Mayo proves it navigable. Mayo Clinic's director of social media, Lee Aase, believes social media and the risk of breaking regulations still induces fear in the industry, but because of social media's overwhelming prevalence, he believes it is something all brands should adopt.

Live Colonoscopy

Mayo Clinic is quite familiar with live social video and has produced several live video streams over the years. One stream stood out to us as both a daring and creative use of the medium. Mayo chose to **live stream a colonoscopy** to promote cancer screening awareness and mitigate fear many patients have about getting screened.

The colon cancer awareness movement already had a community surrounding it, supported by several cancer advocacy groups including The American Cancer Society. Mayo Clinic saw this as an opportunity to create content around a topic that is important to both their brand and their audience. They partnered with the Fight Colorectal Cancer organization as part of their **One Million Strong campaign** and live streamed a colonoscopy through Periscope.

Healthcare can be technical and difficult for a non-healthcare audience to understand. By taking about a disease state, Mayo Clinic better positioned themselves to resonate with a wider audience and generate an emotional response, rather than just simply talking about the Mayo Clinic brand.

The video also promoted an open Q&A format with an expert. The live stream encouraged people to engage and ask questions to a Mayo Clinic physician.

In a podcast interview produced by **Health Standards HITcast**, Aase, who volunteered himself to be the patient in the video, was asked what would have happened to the campaign if the doctor found cancer during the screening. He assured listeners that even if they found something bad, it would have just proved a better case for people to go out and get screened themselves.

The colonoscopy live stream was successful and generated over 3,000 live viewers, and almost 2,000 more views within 24 hours of streaming.

What Worked

Rallying Around a Topic Bigger Than the Brand

Mayo Clinic was effective in reaching a wide audience because they rallied around a cause much bigger than the brand itself. Rather than communicating brand initiatives, products, or services, Mayo focused on spreading awareness to save lives. In doing so they created an authentic voice behind the brand, which is especially important in healthcare. Viewers benefited from the stream by interacting with a healthcare expert and by viewing the procedure, both easing their potential fears.

Content Atomization

Mayo Clinic maximized its impact by atomizing content across social channels such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Because they repurposed the content they saw more engagement and social interaction than if they reserved the content for the live stream only. The campaign was propelled by the hashtag [#ScopeScope](#), which was shared over 1,200 times by 600 users. A version of the feed was also repurposed for Times Square's [NASDAQ Jumbotron](#) where it received an estimated 31 million impressions.

Partnering with Another Organization

By partnering with the [Fight Colorectal Cancer](#) and other advocacy groups, Mayo Clinic added even more credibility to their video stream.

Where to Take it Next

Mayo Clinic is exploring a variety of social apps to keep their content fresh and engaging. Facebook is a favorite because, unlike Periscope, it's an app most people already have.

In Aase's words, Facebook is more about sharing content with friends, whereas Periscope is about searching for topics; two different, but useful platforms for the brand. Ultimately this is just the beginning of the live social video road for Mayo Clinic.



SolidWorks

SolidWorks is an industry-leading developer of complete 3D software tools. The SolidWorks tools allow users to design and push new products to market; many of the great products we know and love.

The collaborative nature of the software drives the SolidWorks community to seek feedback and peer support. SolidWorks caters to their community through both digital and physical channels to help promote learning and problem solving. Their Facebook page has almost one million likes and their online community hosts over two million users, resellers, and partners. The brand also hosts an annual user conference called SolidWorks World where over 5,000 raving fans gather to further connect and share ideas.

SolidWorks World Live Stream

For the first time this year, SolidWorks decided to complement their traditional event webcast with live social video. With goals to improve the overall event experience, capture attention from a larger audience, and provide exclusive online content, Facebook Live was the obvious pilot platform due to their large following.

Initially, SolidWorks planned to test out the social streaming tool by broadcasting a handful of conference sessions supported by shorter live videos. But, due to the enormous success of the live stream during the event, on the last day of the conference they decided to go big and stream their general session using live social video as well. In total, SolidWorks attracted over 81,000 live viewers through their Facebook Live streams. Specifically, their **general session stream** engaged 18,000 viewers, and netted 714 new fans. In addition, their traditional event live stream averaged about 1,300 viewers a day and registration for the webcast platform increased by about 30% from day one to day three. Much of this increase was due to the promotion of the live stream through Facebook Live. It is clear by these numbers that when done right, live social video as a channel for broadcasting event content can be a major success and is well worth the investment.

What Worked

Use of an Existing Live Event

SolidWorks could quickly turn around live social videos at the last minute because they were simply repurposing content already at their disposal. The brand was already accustomed to live broadcasting their event through a webcast, and therefore already had the talent and gear necessary to make live social video a success.

Access and Unique Vantage Points

SolidWorks captured a behind the scenes look of their event through additional streams featuring interviews with attendees, sponsors, and SolidWorks employees. The videos were moderated by a host that guided viewers through

the content. Each video received over 2,000 views and helped emulate the full event experience for those who could not attend in person. For those who did make it, these videos supplemented their experience by highlighting specific booths and partners featured at the event. Attendees may have been streaming event content through live social video, but by utilizing the channel, SolidWorks was able to show their event through their own vantage points.

Tapping into a Large Receptive Audience

SolidWorks has been effective in cultivating a large, passionate online community, both with industry-leading products, and an excellent social strategy, as evidenced by their nearly one million Facebook fans. Realizing that only a small fraction of their community can attend SolidWorks World annually, they astutely started webcasting the event years ago.

While webcasting is a compelling way to distribute event content, SolidWorks realized that by opening up content to their social community, they could increase viewership and engagement. Although traditional webcasts have some barriers to entry, striking a balance between webcast and live social video streams ensured that SolidWorks captured leads while maximizing awareness.

Where to Take it Next

SolidWorks took a risk with live social video and it paid off. But, to prove valuable in the long run, the brand is on a mission to understand how live social video can be used in lead generation. As for future improvements on their live social strategy, SolidWorks is looking to enhance real time engagement with their future streams. The brand will be placing a greater focus on viewer participation and commenting. Additionally, SolidWorks is looking to promote their live streams before they occur, to attract more viewers in the long run. Based on this year's success, it seems likely that SolidWorks will continue to use live social video in their event strategy moving forward.



IBM

As a global technology company driven by innovation, it isn't a surprise that IBM has tapped into the value of live social video. In fact, the tech giant has been experimenting with 'social media-like' systems since the early 90s. Their social endeavors began with internal collaborative systems on Mainframes, and customized chat and feedback tools. The social experimentation continued into the early 2000s where IBM employees were early adopters of LinkedIn, Twitter, and in-house social networking, long before social media went mainstream.

As a brand, IBM has built a strong social presence spanning a variety of channels including YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Pinterest. Their social strategy is centered on content that helps their audiences make better, smarter business decisions.

By understanding their target audiences, and simplifying their technical messaging, IBM has been successful in creating content that resonates.

“We want people engaging with the IBM brand. We know IBM is a very complex and technical company. Yet, although what we sell is complicated, we try to talk about it in a very simple way.”⁶

IBM VP of Branded Content and Global Creative, Ann Rubin

Historically, IBM has experimented with content that is both directly and indirectly related to their products and services, with an end goal of keeping their audiences continually learning and engaged.

Micro-events on Crowdcast

IBM has started experimenting with live social video to support their event audience acquisition efforts, specifically for their **2016 IBM Connect conference**. The goal was to engage and excite potential attendees before stepping foot in the venue. The live social video tool of choice was **Crowdcast**, and their streaming efforts consisted of short, live "micro-events" in the months leading up to the conference.

These **micro-events** showcased specific speakers and content, and encouraged viewers to join the conversation by discussing topics to be featured in the upcoming conference. The series featured a key IBM senior executive engaging with two breakout speakers delivering and capturing insights, tips, tricks, and expectations for Connect 2016. As the series progressed, several micro-events were tailored to specific core audiences such as business partners or event attendees from the education industry.

As a whole, these micro-events exceeded IBM's expectations with successful viewership metrics, social discussions, and overall viewer sharing. By utilizing Crowdcast to host these micro-events, IBM was able to amplify their pre-event audience acquisition efforts.



Take a Look

See Brent Turner, SVP Solutions at Cramer quoted in the book *Trending: The complete Guide to Social Media for Events* by Beatrice Whelan.

Want a copy? Email us at theteam@cramer.com we'd be happy to send you one.

What Worked

Content Promotion

Leading up to each live micro-event, IBM marketing and social media teams, along with the individual speakers, promoted the events. During the live stream, the IBM social media team monitored and responded to viewers' comments and curated key takeaways from the live session. By promoting highlights from the micro-event, including quotes from speakers, IBM was able to get more viewers to their live stream. When the session commenced, the Crowdcast platform had the streams instantly available for on-demand replay. In addition, IBM repackaged and promoted this live content across multiple IBM channels and platforms.

Simple Polished Production

Production value was important to IBM. Although these live social videos are expected to have an authentic feel, they still wanted to ensure that the videos were a polished representation of the brand. Each live social video was produced using a simple standalone light for proper subject and set illumination, and a USB connected microphone. These two elements enhanced the audio and visual elements of the video—ultimately minimizing extraneous distractions.

Viewer Engagement

Just like other live social video platforms, Crowdcast allows for real time commenting and interactions from the audience. IBM was effective in monitoring these engagements throughout the live stream, making sure to answer any questions that came in. Through commenting, viewers established a connection with the speaker and the IBM brand.

Where to Take it Next

Large corporations can face additional challenges (especially in the world of technology) when trying to build connections with a variety of audiences. IBM's content strategy will continue to focus on delivering valuable content with a clear and concise message. Ann Rubin concludes, "if we tell our story very simply and be relevant and timely about it, we can create a lot of value."⁶

In the case of IBM, live social video proved to be a robust tool that aligns with the goals of their content strategy. Due to the success of their initial pilot, live social video will most likely expand into their greater business portfolio.

How You Should Think About Live Video

Preparation and considerations for your first live social video

Tackling Live Social Video

Now that you can see how any brand, consumer or B2B (even in a regulated industry) can find value in live social video, let's discuss what you need to be thinking about when planning for, and using, this channel.

Authenticity and Storytelling are the Centerpieces

More than ever, it's difficult for today's brands to spread an authentic message. To do so they need to get real. Live video is as raw and real as it gets. And because it happens in real time, viewers can sense the legitimate vulnerabilities of the brand.

In our over communicating world, brands won't be heard unless they're telling stories. Stories create memories by eliciting real emotions. We won't go into the elements of an effective story here, but think about the message you want to convey, then pull from your brand's own experience to highlight that message. By telling stories, marketers have a much better chance of reaching and resonating with their audience.

Spontaneity can be Polished

Some gurus may caution your brand against appearing too produced, too canned—believing that to ring true with the style of social, you're better off going off-the-cuff.

We disagree.

It's not preparation and production that kill the personality of your presentation. Certainly, live social video isn't the place for highly scripted, highly edited content – those come across as badly disguised advertisements. But winging it is not the answer.

Prepping for live social streaming shouldn't differ far from regular video production. You can appear both professional and natural, prepared and human. (And, of course, the extent to which you want to "fit" with the other social styles – snarky, silly, hip – depend entirely on your brand.)

Facilitate Co-Creation

Live social video is not as effective without the social interactions, input, and feedback of your live audience. To take advantage of the feedback inherent to social, a listening strategy needs to be set up for before, during, and after the live stream.

Before

Live social video lives and dies by content. Social conversations can help dictate what content your live social video should feature. Utilizing social listening techniques can help determine what is relevant to your audience, and simply asking them for input prior to going live can help ensure that the topic will resonate with your audience.

During

Social is crucial to viewer engagement and satisfaction throughout the live video stream. Consider a format that provides a venue for your audience to contribute to the live stream. A Q&A discussion is a tried and true approach, as are polling, and asking participants for their own experience on a specific topic. Unlike traditional video, live social video is a two-way interaction, and therefore it is vital to include the audience and address questions and comments in real time to keep viewers interested.

After

The social aspect of live social video does not stop once the live stream concludes. Digital tools can help measure viewership, what people thought of the content, and brand sentiment, influencing the strategy and production of future live streams.

Planning Criteria

We determined a series of factors that should be evaluated and considered when producing live social video. We used these variables to understand what success looks like for first movers in this medium.

Live Social Video Evaluation

Content

- What is the purpose of my live social video, and what message do I want to convey?
- Does the content clearly inform or entertain the audience, instead of just advertise the brand?
- What is my audience talking about on social now?
- How can my brand deliver content that is relevant to my audience?
- Does my topic provide value to the audience? Is it relevant and engaging?
- Is this content positively impacting brand sentiment?

Audience Engagement and Perceptions

- How well targeted is my audience?
- Is the right audience engaged?
- What is the audience's perception of my brand?
- Am I encouraging my customers to be co-creators in my brand's story?
- How can I influence positive brand sentiment?

Production and Experience Design

- What elements can add or detract from a viewer's overall experience?
- How interactive was the experience?
- Does the production seem purposeful?
- Is the content appropriate for the platform I am using?
- Was the experience design appropriate for the audience (e.g. refined and professional versus practiced but organic)?
- Is the visual design interesting, engaging, and on-brand?

Marketing

- How well did this message and experience fit into my brand's overall marketing and business strategy?
- Is the cadence of utilization appropriate? (e.g. is my brand pushing out content at intervals that keeps pace with audience's needs)?

Analytics

- Am I reviewing my content/comments, and adjusting for future live streams?
- What worked and what didn't?
- What content seemed to resonate most with my viewers?

Get Started, Here's How

Dip your toe in the water by live streaming your existing live events.

Extend Content and Campaigns Already Underway

While live social video may be a powerful tool, it's important to keep in mind—it's a channel not a strategy unto itself. So, the key question is not, "how does my brand launch in live social?" but, "what is my brand already doing that could benefit from an injection of live +social + video?"

Webcasts

If you already have a calendar full of webcasts or educational content, live social video allows you to switch from the forced synchronization of PowerPoint, to a more conversational setting. Through live social video you can give a larger, online audience a chance to learn from your presenter's message in a manner that feels more authentic.

Webcasts are already live, so take the content and try streaming it on a social network simultaneously. Having the video stream on social networks helps with the interactive nature of the presentation rather than pushing out content on PowerPoint slides.

Webinars via social make the viewing experience less disruptive for your audience. By bringing your webinar to where your audience is interacting, it gives your webcast a better chance of attracting engaged viewers. It is easier to view content through live social video than trying to overcome the hurdle of downloading a new webinar app, follow a link, or register for the event ahead of time.

Consider ways in which traditional webcast slides are keeping things too static. With a live demonstration or change of scenery, live social video can help illustrate new concepts and keep viewers engaged.

Product Launches and Big Announcements

Businesses spend hours, weeks, and even months influencing the strategic direction of a brand, or brainstorming ways to communicate a new product launch. Live social video can be an effective way to amplify the excitement of a big announcement by spreading the word quickly, to a large audience. The ease and cost effectiveness of live social video gives an authentic feel to tried and true announcements.

The live nature of live social video makes sure that your audience gets the latest news as it breaks. Far from a flat press release, live social video is a dynamic way to present a message to a targeted audience.

By tapping into your customer's world with live social video you are showing them that keeping them informed matters to your brand. Consider inviting a select group of people to share in the moment by promoting the reveal ahead of time. Make the content even more shareable by creating short video snippets of the broadcast's best moments that can be shared across social platforms after the fact.

Meetings and User Conferences

While travel budgets may have resurged in recent years, it's still impossible for professionals to get to every critical event in their field. You may not necessarily want to broadcast your entire conference live, but giving viewers that can't be there an inside look at the conference can be an effective use of the channel. Plus, it can generate enough excitement to encourage viewers to attend future conferences.

The American Association of Advertising Agencies (4A's) utilized live video in 2016 for their Transformation event that brings together thought leaders in the industries of marketing, advertising, and media. By streaming live, 4A's grew their audience 25 times over.⁷

Fearful your live stream viewers will get comfortable and not actually attend future events? Don't be. According to Digitell, **30% of people who watch a live streamed event will actually attend the same event in the following year.**⁷

Expert Interviews

If you're already using content marketing successfully, you may have content at your fingertips in the form of internal thought leaders. Maybe you're planning on creating content from an internal interview with an expert. Consider capturing that information with live social video through a Q&A session with your viewers.

By putting a human face to content in real time, you are building trust among your audience, and authenticity within your brand. Open the discussion to viewers through chat tools and let them guide the conversation. If harsh questions or concerns with the brand surface, use it as a tool to address previous mistakes and take ownership. In a world where brands are becoming less trusted by their customers, being as open and honest as possible can go a long way.

Want More?

Are you ready to adapt to live social video and use it for all its worth? Let us know if you want to be part of a workshop on a related topic.

Select the **workshop** you'd be most interested in attending.

STORY BUILDERS—

Elevate Your Brand's Pitch

VIDEO MARKETING—

Build Your Playbook

LIVE SOCIAL VIDEO—

Plan Your Campaigns

VIDEO STRATEGY—

Drive Your Business

Thinking Framework

If you're like most brands, you're already using content marketing and social channels. Use your existing content and channels to help guide your entry into live social video as an effective marketing channel.

Current Touchpoints

You are already doing live events in the form of webcasts, and other events. Instead of an audio + PowerPoint centric broadcast, utilize live social video and reach a new audience.

Formats

Think about what value live video could bring your audience. Q&A sessions with thought leaders or answering top questions about your products live can be compelling content. Consider using live social video for product launches and other press releases.

Additional Marketing Touchpoints

The tent post marketing approach prioritizes one or a few large, highly engaging, usually live touchpoints, supported by lightweight interactions. Consider live social video for additional lower fidelity touchpoints across this continuum.

Live Complements

Extend the size and scope of your live event audience with live social video. Create more intimate experiences through teaser pieces. At the event, go backstage, interview presenters and facilitate an 'insider' status for your audience.

Conclusion

Driven by changing consumer expectations, behaviors, and attitudes, live social video is an inevitable marketing channel that is enabled by the transformative technologies that came before it. It is quickly becoming a core marketing pillar that any brand (regardless of industry) can use effectively. The brands who embrace change and are willing to experiment with live social video will be the winners.

About Cramer

As a brand experience agency, **Cramer** is thriving in today's new experiential era of marketing. The company's fast growth has come as it expands its relationships with long-standing clients, while also landing a new roster of global brands. Cramer's portfolio of work spans a variety of brands including Caterpillar, Mimecast, GE, IBM, Jordan's Furniture, Puma, Siemens, W.B. Mason, and UPS. These clients trust Cramer to invent, craft, and fuel content-driven experiences, including meetings and events, activations, community and advocacy programs, mixed reality, and marketing campaigns. Visit cramer.com to see how we achieve more for our clients.

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We invent, craft, and fuel content-driven experiences that achieve more for global brands.

If you're ready to achieve more, so are we. **Let's go.**

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The Opportunity Outweighs the Risk



Brent Turner, SVP of Solutions, and Scott Palmer, Managing Director of Cramer Motion Studios, on the benefits and lack of barriers found in live social video.

Q: Why now? Brands have just gotten the hang of social, why should we be paying attention to live social video?

BT: Live social video has reached its inflection point for end users. We are now at that point where live video is everywhere with social tools like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram adopting this live streaming functionality. This is indicative of a larger movement where the barrier between a camera and a person is going away. Live social video is a natural extension of everything being 'of the moment'. It's a tool for brands that want to embrace the idea of transparency, authenticity, and customer engagement.

Q: What's the difference between live social video and live video?

BT: It's that social element that makes live social video different. You can watch a video live with a community and share what you just saw in real time. On the viewership side, you can break down the wall and talk to your audience and they can talk to each other. Brands should be prepared to utilize this social aspect because that is where the true value of live social video stems from.

Q: Why should B2B brand marketers care about live social video?

SP: Often B2B brands build relationships with passive marketing collateral that customers can't interact with beyond the sales representative or account executive. As a customer, you end up getting stuck at a level of interaction that can only allow for so much transparency, or authenticity. Live social video allows brands to break past the polished marketing barrier. With live social video, you get authenticity that you can't script, and end up having a bigger impact on the people who see it.

Q: What about content for brands in highly regulated industries?

BT: Brands that sit in highly regulated industries don't have to do product messaging all the time. Live social video can be opened to internal staff and experts. Shift the conversation to be more about the person you are highlighting. Focus on bridging a personal connection between the speaker and the audience.

As for mitigating risk, make sure to prep your speaker beforehand on how to speak in-line with your industry's regulations. If someone in the community asks a question that you don't feel like you can answer, defer them to your website or a source where they can get their question answered.

Q: This video is a representation of my brand and I want it to look polished. What equipment do I need to produce my live social video?

SP: As for equipment, a nice light and a good microphone is all you need. There is no need for scripting, or hair and makeup. If you are new to live social video, the production value should be just enough where you are able to minimize distractions. If viewers can see and hear the video clearly, that's all you really need.

Q: How can live social video supplement my live event?

BT: Live social video allows brands to bring that event aspect to a geographically disperse digital audience by providing content in real time. You can highlight content like a panel discussion, a fireside chat, or even an executive presentation. But the best thing about live social video is that you can layer in community discussions. You don't have to wait until the Q&A session to start talking amongst your peers. The social element of live social video enriches the audience's viewing experience in a way that live events can't because they can augment the conversation.

Q: What are your predictions for live social video moving forward?

SP: One year from now, everyone will be taking part in live social video. It allows brands to connect with people in a way that traditional marketing channels can't. The brands that have already embraced the live channel aggressively, and don't overthink it, are going to be the most successful.

**Want to get energized about live social video?
Feel free to reach out to Brent or Scott to learn more.**

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