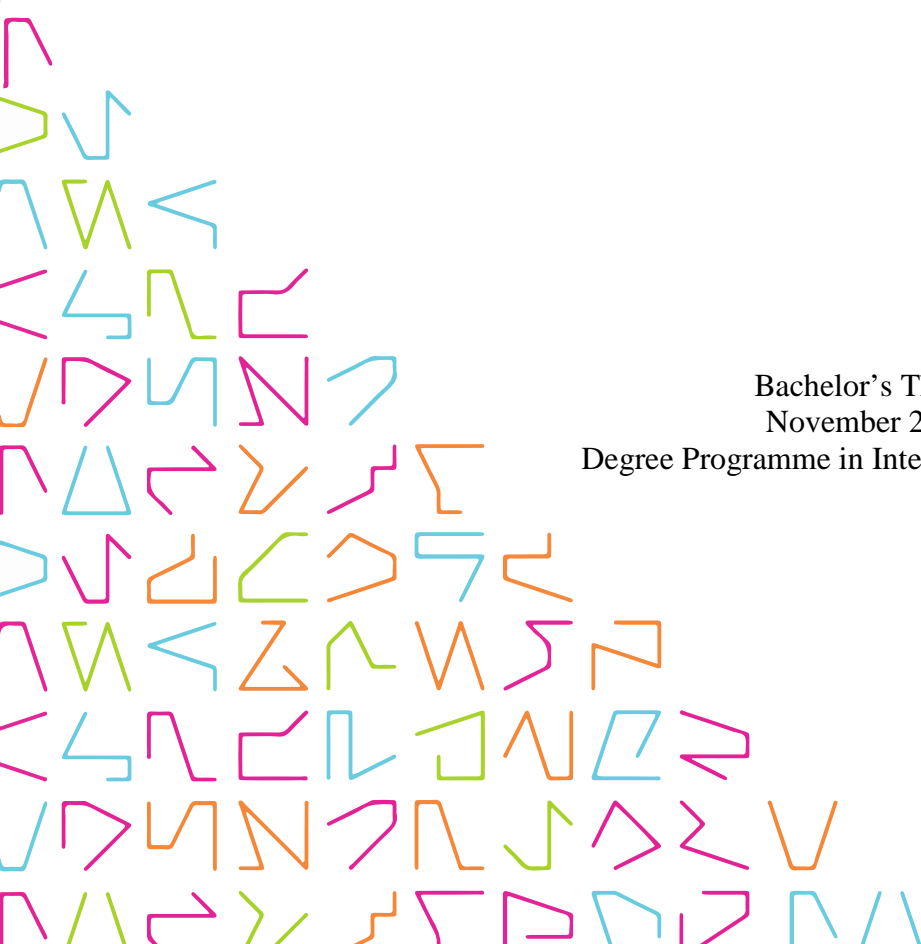


VISUAL COMMUNICATION IN MARKETING

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ABSTRACT

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This bachelor's thesis aimed to provide insights for small businesses on effective visual communication in marketing through the analyses of four promotional videos. An existing marketing theory which is "Two Pillars of a Successful Marketing Strategy" was introduced to build a case for the importance of customer-centric approach in effective visual communication, along with the concepts of storytelling and customer emotions.

The promotional videos were analyzed based on a theoretical model "Six Principles of Sticky Ideas" in order to provide better understanding of the complex nature of videos and draw meaningful conclusion from the examples of effective visual communication. The qualitative data were collected from varying types of digital sources, articles, literature, and the author's observations.

It was found through the analyses of the promotional videos that the "Six Principles of Sticky Ideas" can be used as a reliable cornerstone for effective visual communication, and that in each case there is indication of relevance to what makes a marketing strategy successful, i.e., understanding the demographics and the psychographics of the customer and integrating the resulting knowledge in business.

The findings suggest that creating a promotional video requires a holistic approach for it to be effective in terms of how well it reaches the audience. As the analyses were done only for the promotional videos of big businesses, it should be indicated that creating effective visual communication does not equate with big budget, and that small businesses can benefit from the analyses by looking into possibilities of planning their own successful visual communication.

Keywords: marketing, marketing communications, marketing strategy, visual communication, promotional video

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1 INTRODUCTION

Vision (sight) is arguably the most dominant sense that affects perceptions for most people. Generally, when people see something with their own eyes, people believe it to be true. When it comes to marketing, the power of vision lies in the fact that processing sensory data from sight happens not just consciously but also unconsciously.

Author Michael E. Gerber (2009) says in his book “The E-myth Revisited: Why Most Small Businesses Don’t Work and What to Do About it” that it is a customer’s unconscious mind that makes the decisions, rather than a customer’s conscious mind. His assertion goes on to say that buying decisions are made irrationally and customers are generally not aware of the process (Gerber 2009, 221).

Given the fact that buying happens unconsciously, most small businesses fail because they do not know the customers well enough to influence their unconscious buying decisions, which can be only achieved through knowing the customers more than the customers know about themselves (Gerber 2009, 222). This perspective, which is customer-centric at its core, was considered to be a valuable insight by the author of this thesis, and thus was used as a framework for introducing the key concepts throughout the thesis.

The thesis aimed to provide insights for small businesses on effective visual communication. The analyses of four promotional videos provide a close look at how each video is crafted—what effects there are, how each effect comes to work together, and what makes the said video is effective—while taking note of how the audience’s **demographics** and **psychographics** are relevant to each case. The analyses are based on “Six Principles of Sticky Ideas” introduced in the book “Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die” by Chip Heath and Dan Heath (2007).

The thesis took the top-down approach, which typically starts from the big picture; the thesis was structured in a way that guides readers from broad concepts to narrow concepts.

In this bachelor's thesis, the "effectiveness" as in "effective promotional video" was judged based on popularity and amount of positive responses from the audience on social media such as Facebook and YouTube.

In addition, the usage of the term "marketing" is not elaborately made distinctive in meaning from the term "marketing communications" unless stated otherwise; it is assumed that both terms are interchangeable throughout the thesis.

The research questions as guidelines to achieve the aim of the thesis were as follows:

1. How can businesses make better decisions in visual communication in their marketing efforts?
2. What are examples of effective visual communication through videos?
3. What can be learned from the examples?

2 MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

Marketing communication can be defined as promotional activities of an organisation, having communication as its core function (Gillis 2011, 380). Promotional activities assume that the organisation acts with an agenda, as the aim is to have a defined audience take certain action (Gillis 2011, 380). This puts marketing communications professionals in a position of responsibility in making ethical decisions.

Marketing has infamously a poor reputation. To quote Seth Godin's words in his podcast interview with Louis Grenier (2017), "——we're selfish, lying, short-term thinking scum. We believe that our job is to manipulate people as we market to them." (Godin 2017).

Additionally, the negative association may have partly come from the mass advertising that creates lots of noise instead of value for customers. It is also hard to deny that there are many schemes, which can be referred as poor marketing.

In this unforgiving, highly information-saturated digital era, Gerber says that customers are flooded with confusion and indecision, and the challenge for small businesses has to do with speaking the language of their customers (Gerber 2009, 226—227).

Marketing communications are often executed arbitrarily, or without much consideration, because most small business owners consider marketing as nothing more than "good common sense," which more often than not, means "my opinion" (Gerber 2009, 229—230).

This means what is true about their customers is discarded, to the detriment of the businesses, as the customers' demographics and psychographics are not appropriately acknowledged (Gerber 2009, 229—230).

With this customer-centric approach, the implication that marketing treads a thin line between influence and manipulation may still be present. Thus, having a strong focus on delivering value to customers may help businesses in their marketing communications.

2.1 Marketing strategy

According to Gerber, demographics and psychographics are the “Two Pillars of a Successful Marketing Strategy” (Gerber 2009, 222). An example of elements of demographics and psychographics are shown in figure 1 (Birkett 2017).

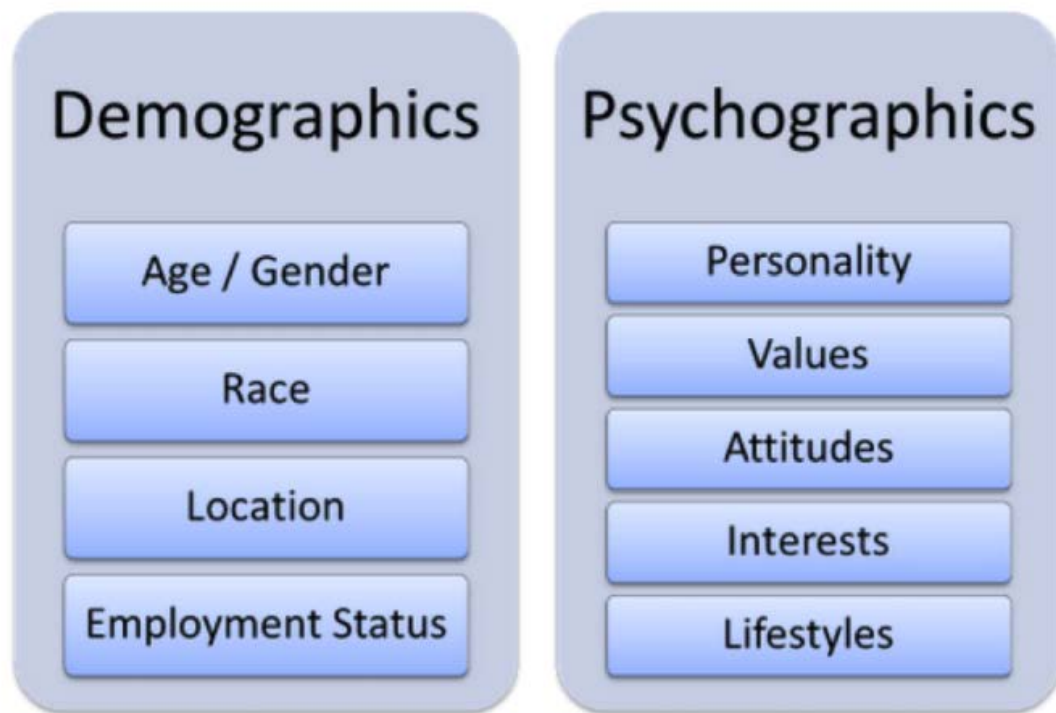


FIGURE 1. An example of elements of demographics and psychographics (Birkett 2017)

The link between demographics and psychographics is that demographics, i.e., who the customer is, helps to determine psychographics, i.e., why the customer buys (Gerber 2009, 222). Metaphorically speaking, the “Two Pillars” are then used as measuring sticks to judge whether a decision is aligned with them, and if the consequence of the decision is capable of satisfying unconscious needs of the customer.

Once the demographics has been determined, the success of a marketing strategy lies in determining whether a decision, e.g., what colours or shapes to choose, is aligned with the psychographics data (Gerber 2009, 229—230). Not determining it would mean marketing *at people*, instead of *with people* (Grenier 2017; Godin 2017), which is not effective in today’s digital era.

Reality only exists within the mind, which consists of beliefs, conclusions, perceptions, and attitudes (Gerber 2009, 225). And the role of customer's unconscious mind in a successful marketing strategy has a lot to do with perceptions, which lies at the core of decision-making process (Gerber 2009, 225). This will apply as long as the saying "perception is reality" goes.

According to neurophysiologist Robert Efron (n.d., 137), the workings of perception have never been precisely articulated. That being said, perception can be defined as "a process by which individuals organise and interpret their sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their environment." (Srivastava 2009, 1).

Following the definition, it can be inferred that customers make the decisions based on their own meaning received by their own interpretation and sensory impressions. Additionally, a person's perceptions are influenced by both internal and external factors. Figure 2 shows the factors that influence perception (Srivastava 2009, 3).

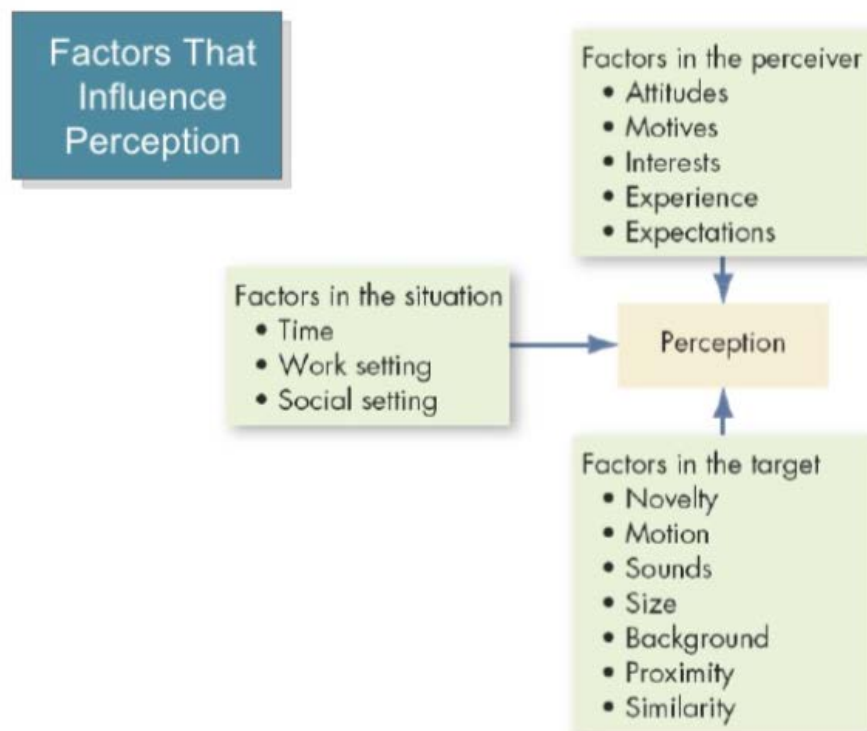


FIGURE 2. Factors that influence perception (Srivastava 2009, 3, modified)

Many small businesses do not have the luxury of spending too much money as they lack in resources in comparison to big businesses. With a big budget, finding out about customers based on the "Two Pillars of a Successful Marketing Strategy" will be easier.

However, it is worthwhile to note that benefiting from the demographics and psychographics data is possible, if equipped with curiosity and willingness to invest time, without necessarily having to spend a lot of money.

2.2 Visual communication

Visual communication is defined as “the expression of ideas and information using visual forms or aids” according to Business Dictionary (Business Dictionary 2017, date of retrieval 01.11.2017).

It refers to everything that can be expressed visually, e.g., the look and feel of the website, the design of proposal file, the colour of business card. Visual communication takes various kinds of medium such as graphic design, illustration, typography, video, and animation, for delivering messages visually.

The following (figure 3) is an example of visual communication presented in the form of infographics, communicating information about visual communication and marketing. It was created by diagram software Creately (Silva 2017). The example shows the efficiency of visual communication, in that it does more with less through combination of texts and visual elements.

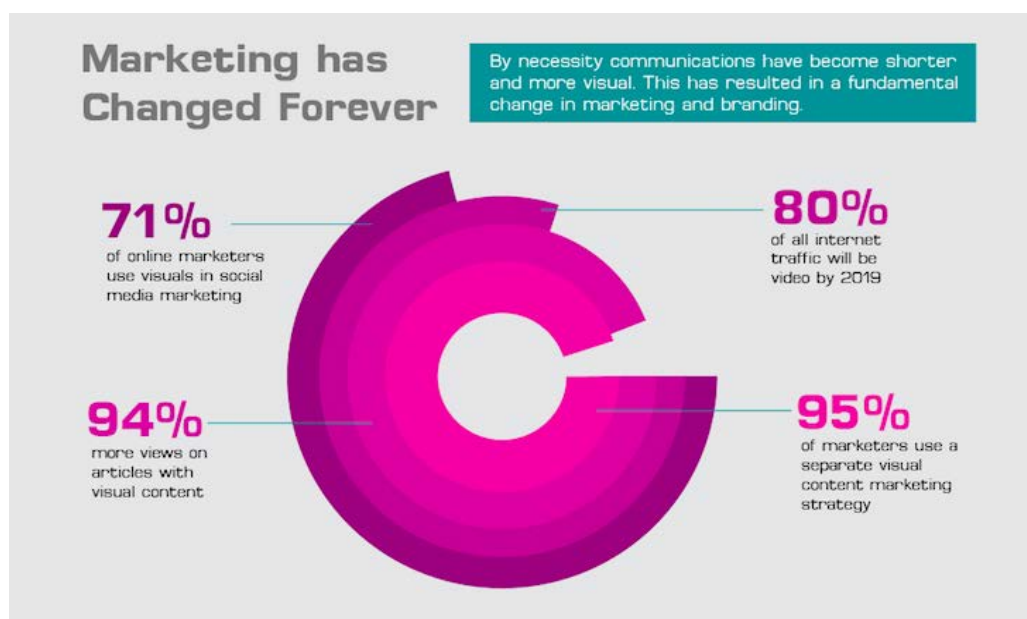


FIGURE 3. Visual communication in marketing in the form of infographics (Silva 2017, modified)

There are many different ways to be strategic with visual communication, which poses a challenge for many small businesses. This may be more so if the business has not determined the demographics and the psychographics of its customers.

Visual communication's role in marketing takes a part in the psychographic aspect of a marketing strategy. This is because—bearing no relation to validity—the nature of visual communication indicates that “seeing is believing” and “perception is reality.”

The link between visual communication and the psychographic aspect of a marketing strategy can be manifested in how easily perception is altered by slight changes of elements in a visual design. This is because people perceive without necessarily giving a thought to such change (Gerber 2009, 224).

Change in perception affects customers' decision-making process, and the decisions can be influenced primarily by demographics. Gerber explains it through the case of IBM's brand in people's mind regarding the colour “blue,” which is highly appealing and preferable to IBM's demographic model in comparison to the colour “orange” (Gerber 2009, 222—223).

With the given insight that the important decisions happen unconsciously in a customer's mind (Gerber 2009), it is worthwhile to note that the power of perception through visual communication can be easily and readily underestimated by many people.

2.3 Storytelling

Storytelling has recently become a business buzzword. However, it is deeply ingrained as part of everyday life. As is the case, the brain is wired for stories. Studies say that when the story is told effectively the brain is simulated almost as if it is experiencing the happening within the story (Widrich 2016; Heath, C. & Heath, D. 2007, 206).

Heath, the authors of “Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die,” point out that good stories yield **simulation** which refers to knowledge about how to act, and **inspiration** which is motivation to act. Both simulation and inspiration serve the purpose of generating *action* (Heath, C. & Heath, D. 2007, 206).

Given that the goal of marketing communications is to affect a defined customer's behaviour, it can be inferred that the fundamental aim of storytelling in marketing is to encourage desired *action* from the customer.

2.4 Customer emotions

Neurologist Antonio Damasio (1995) in his book "Descartes' Error" said, "We are not thinking machines that feel, we are feeling machines that think." That is to say, what drives human behaviour is primarily emotions, rather than thoughts.

This finding indicates, along with other numerous studies, that buying behaviour of customers is first and foremost driven by emotions. The importance of this is manifested in the examples of companies that experienced ample return of investment through connecting with customers' emotions (Magids, Zorfas & Leemon 2015).

Customers make the decisions unconsciously, and the job of small businesses is to study demographics and psychographics of customers (Gerber, 2009). Emotions are more unconscious than conscious. If both demographics and psychographics have to do with customer's unconscious buying behaviour, it can be inferred that customer emotions are closely related to both demographics and psychographics.

One vigorous research that identified 300 emotional motivators, says that it is possible to strategically target motivating emotions of customers, albeit difficult, as customer emotions are hardly constant, influenced by several factors such as industry, brand, customer touch point, and the position of the customer in the decision-making process (Magids et al. 2015).

This finding suggests that businesses can develop a structural process at the most basic level by learning about demographics and psychographics of customers, and plan marketing communications in a way that resonates with customer emotions. Figure 4 shows ten most common emotional motivators that drive customer behaviour (Magids et al. 2015).

I am inspired by a desire to:	Brands can leverage this motivator by helping customers:
Stand out from the crowd	Project a unique social identity; be seen as special
Have confidence in the future	Perceive the future as better than the past; have a positive mental picture of what's to come
Enjoy a sense of well-being	Feel that life measures up to expectations and that balance has been achieved; seek a stress-free state without conflicts or threats
Feel a sense of freedom	Act independently, without obligations or restrictions
Feel a sense of thrill	Experience visceral, overwhelming pleasure and excitement; participate in exciting, fun events
Feel a sense of belonging	Have an affiliation with people they relate to or aspire to be like; feel part of a group
Protect the environment	Sustain the belief that the environment is sacred; take action to improve their surroundings
Be the person I want to be	Fulfil a desire for ongoing self-improvement; live up to their ideal self-image
Feel secure	Believe that what they have today will be there tomorrow; pursue goals and dreams without worry
Succeed in life	Feel that they lead meaningful lives; find worth that goes beyond financial or socioeconomic measures

FIGURE 4. High-impact emotional motivators (Magids et al. 2015, modified)

3 VIDEO AS A MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS TOOL

Among many visual aids, the demand for video content is exponentially increasing. The popularity of video contents in recent years is manifested in numerous statistics; YouTube, one of the most popular social media platforms for video, reports that mobile video consumption rapidly grows every year (Bowman 2017), and businesses are being highly competitive in using video contents (Kolowich 2017).

Conversion rate, which is “the percentage of users who take a desired action,” according to Nielsen Norman Group, is an important indicator of a website’s performance as it can measure whether the website is performing well in terms of user experience (Nielsen 2013). Conversion rates have been proved to be higher when videos were used as a marketing tool, as shown in multiple statistics (Bowman 2017).

Video as a marketing communications tool has inevitably close connection to social media, which is platforms such as Facebook, Snapchat, YouTube and Instagram, where video contents can be shared. This indicates that video as a marketing communications tool follows the nature of social media, which is connectivity and engagement.

As is the case, effective marketing communication through video has elements of connectivity and engagement. This is evident through the following result (figure 5) in the report named “Video Marketing Strategy Survey,” in which “increasing online engagement” is one of the top important objectives of an effective video marketing strategy (Ascend2 2015, 5).

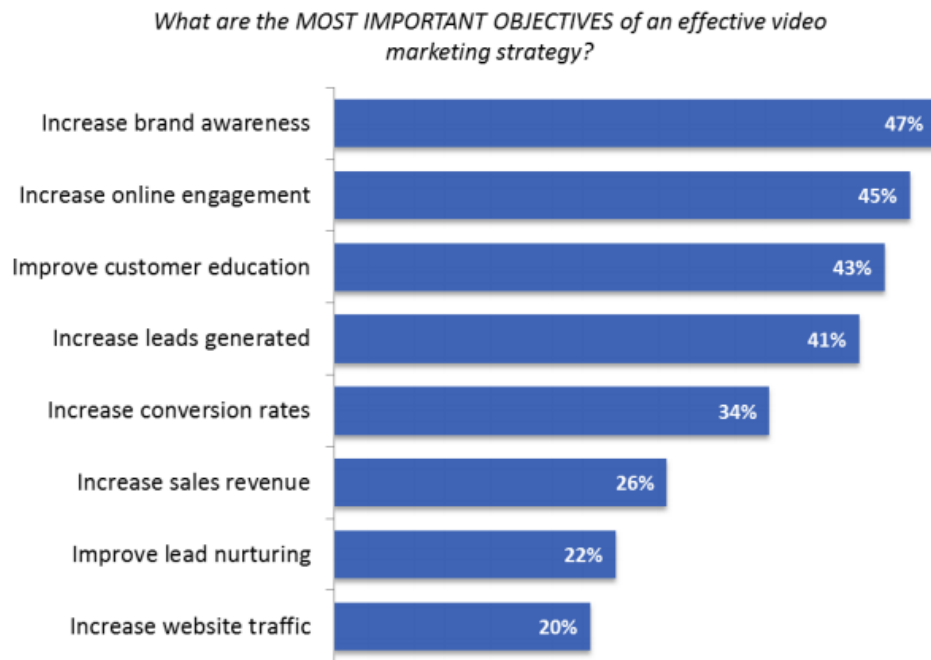


FIGURE 5. Increasing online engagement as one of the top objectives of an effective video marketing strategy (Ascend2 2015, 5)

The effectiveness of video as a medium is constantly reported by many businesses. Figure 6 shows video as the most effective types of marketing content through the result from the recent survey named “Content Marketing and Distribution” conducted by the research-based marketing organisations (Ascend2 2017, 9).

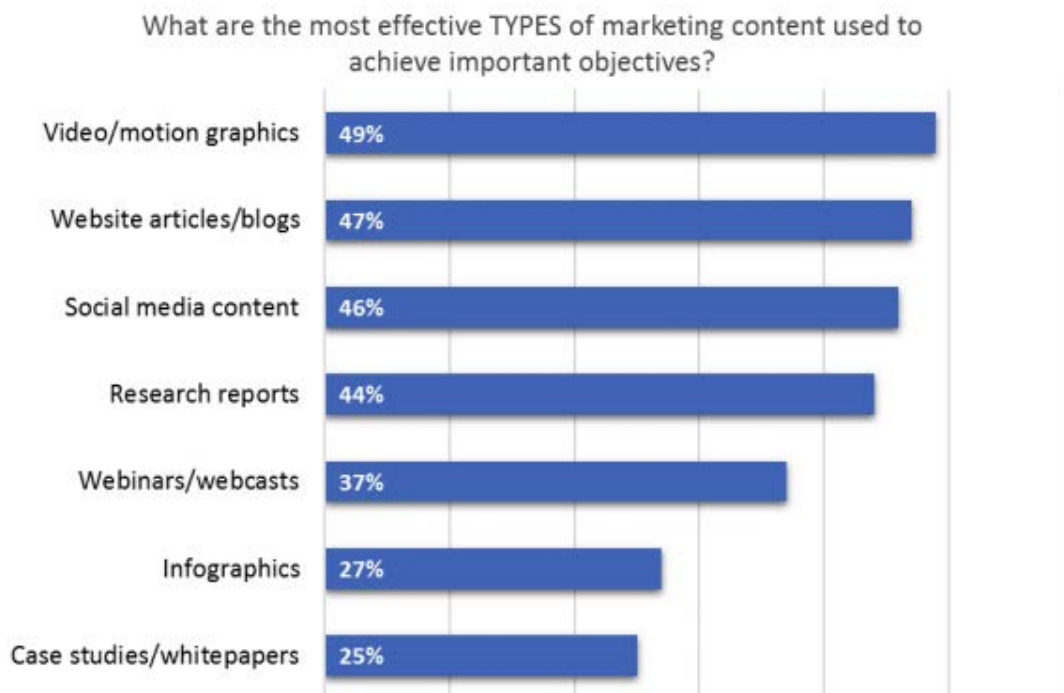


FIGURE 6. Video as the most effective types of marketing content (Ascend2 2017, 9)

At the same time, it has been reported that videos are the most difficult types of content to create. Figure 7 shows the result from the survey named “Content Marketing Trends: From the Small and Medium-Sized Business Perspective” (Ascend2 & Allegra 2015, 10).

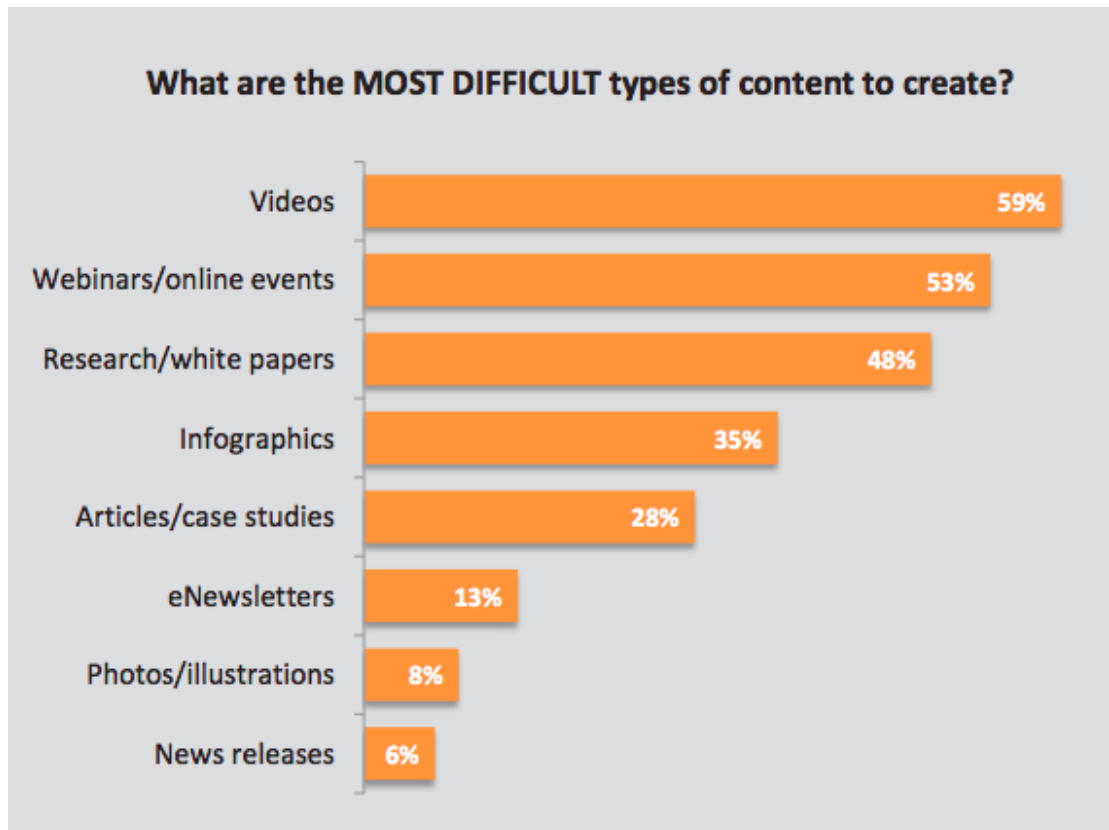


FIGURE 7. Video as the most difficult types of content to create (Ascend2 & Allegra 2015, 10)

The reason can be attributed to the complex nature of video that encompasses different aspects such as script writing, copy writing, animation, editing, filming, directing, sound design, et cetera, and to the fact that most small businesses do not pay enough attention to demographics and psychographics of their customers.

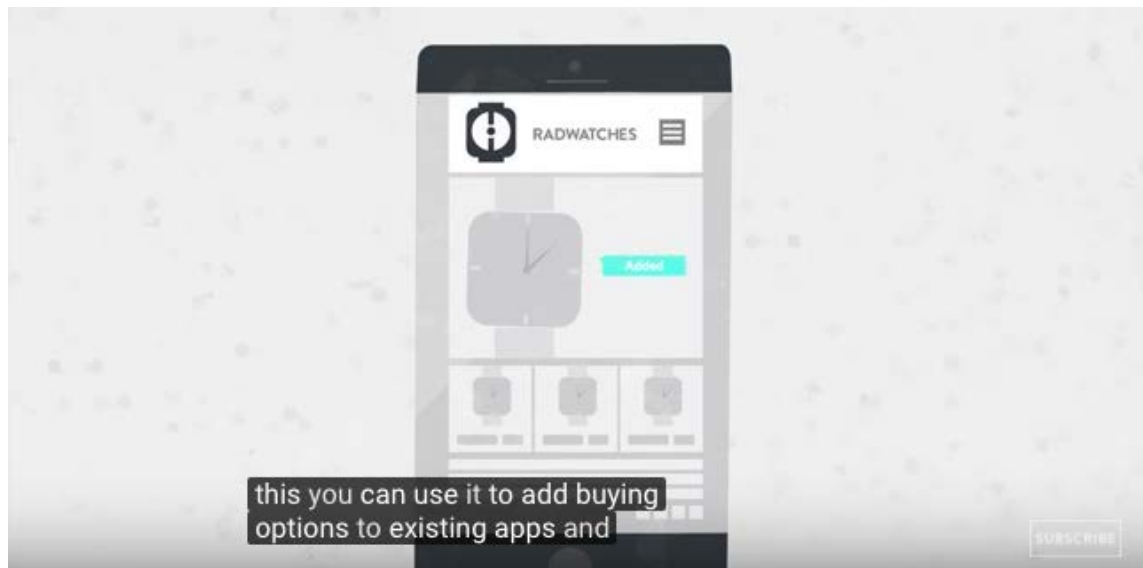
3.1 Types of video

Video as a marketing communications tool is promotional, and types of promotional videos are numerous. Creativity plays an important role in making effective promotional videos.

For this reason, the list of video types can vary. Likewise, the characteristics of a promotional video can freely be multi-dimensional. The followings are three types of most commonly used promotional videos.

3.1.1 Explainer video

Explainer video is a type of video much demanded especially by start-up companies. Its primary goal is to explain a product or service. This type of video can be created by the use of animation that features moving illustrations (picture 1), real life film, or mixed footage of both. Using a script for narration is most commonly practiced. Background music is also an aspect to be considered in making this type of video, as in most videos.



PICTURE 1. Screenshot of the explainer video (Sell through mobile apps with Shopify, YouTube 2016)

3.1.2 Typography video

Typography video, or kinetic typography video, is a type of video that utilises typographic movements as a main actor. Graphic design is the skillset needed to create typography, and the movement is created by animation work.

This type is well-suited for a video where a sense of immediacy is important characteristics to be included. As an example, instant movement of typography inspires a sense of excitement and urgency, and thus can be an effective promotional video for a new product or service, as shown in the case of the promotional video for iPhone X by Apple (2017).

3.1.3 Storytelling video

Storytelling video is one of the most engaging types of promotional video. This type of video can adopt a parody to maximise promotional effect by arousing a sense of familiarity, as shown in the case of the promotional video by LG Electronics, in which the motive was taken from the movie “Kingsman” (2017).

3.2 Analyses of promotional videos

In the following pages, the analyses of four promotional videos are presented as examples of effective visual communication. Each analysis provides the description, taking note of how the demographics and the psychographics of the audience are relevant.

Each video is analysed within the framework of “Six Principles of Sticky Ideas” introduced in the book “Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die” by Chip Heath and Dan Heath (2007).

The “Six Principles of Sticky Ideas” are simplicity, unexpectedness, concreteness, credibility, emotions, and stories (Heath, C. & Heath, D. 2007, 14—18).

1. **Simplicity:** This principle is about making an idea compact and dense so that it only communicates one simple message in a profound way. The principle is also about prioritising, in that it requires exclusion in achieving the simplicity (Heath, C. & Heath, D. 2007, 16).

2. **Unexpectedness:** This principle states that generating interest and curiosity is needed to have the audience to pay attention. Maintaining attention can be achieved by breaking people's expectations (Heath, C. & Heath, D. 2007, 16).
3. **Concreteness:** Concreteness, as opposed to abstract, makes ideas clear. This principle is about speaking in terms of sensory information and human action (Heath, C. & Heath, D. 2007, 17).
4. **Credibility:** Ideas that stick must have their own credentials as people need ways to test ideas before they can believe. Asking a simple question that allows people to test is a better approach than using hard numbers to make ideas credible. Authority is often what gives ideas credibility, but sometimes it is anti-authority. Credibility can also be internally created by providing details and statistics (Heath, C. & Heath, D. 2007, 17).
5. **Emotions:** This principle is about getting people to care by eliciting emotions. However, finding the right emotion to harness is often a challenge (Heath, C. & Heath, D. 2007, 17—18).
6. **Stories:** This principle is about having people to act on ideas. Stories inspire people to act, as stories act like a simulator to the brain (Heath, C. & Heath, D. 2007, 18).

3.2.1 NIKE - Time is Precious

Nike's commercial video "Time is Precious" (2016) was a part of the campaign "Are we running today?" for the holiday season in 2016. The goal of the campaign was to encourage athletes and promote running among its target customers—Business Insider reported in 2015, that runners are one of Nike's top target customer groups (Luts 2015). The video is considerate of the demographics as well as the psychographics in that the video is targeting specific lifestyle of the digital generation as shown through the copy.

The video reached over 1 million views on YouTube. Timeframe of the video is one minute. The type of the video is typography video which is designed to inspire a sense of urgency with fast-appearing and -disappearing typography. The typography in the video

is bold, coloured white, in the black background, and appears in all capital letters from the beginning to the end (picture2).



PICTURE 2. Screenshot of Nike's promotional video (Time is Precious, YouTube 2016)

The narrative voice that reads the typography is robotic and female. The speed of the narrative increases towards the end of the video. The following transcript (Time is Precious YouTube 2016), shows the copy and how the transition happens. One slash between the words indicates the point of transition from one typography to the next in the screen. The more the slash, the longer the transition. The transcript is followed by the analysis.

This / commercial / is / just / 1 / minute // out / of / the / 10 / hours / a / day
 // you / spend / glued / to / your / screens. // That's / 152 / days / a / year. //
 That's / 32 / years / of / your / life // scrolling / stuff. / Clicking / stuff. /
 Emoji-ing / stuff. / Watching / other / people's / pictures // of / their / Caffè
 / Macchiato / or / their / dog // or / their / baby // or / their / dog / and / baby
 / or / the / view / out / of / their / airplane / window // or / a / rainbow. /
 Watching / Vloggers / take / something / out / of / a / box. // Watching /
 reality / shows. // Watching / shows // about / housewives. // Watching /
 shows // about / housewives / in / a / different / state. // Watching / dragons.
 // Watching / a / year's / worth / of / one / show / about / a / Colombian /
 businessman // in / one / evening. / Watching / someone / else / playing / a
 / video / game. // Watching / cats / being / cats. // Swiping / left // left / left
 / left / left / left / left / left / shake // right / left / right. / Deciding / if / a /
 picture / is / a / labradoodle / or / fried / chicken. / Deciding / if / a / picture
 / is / a / Chihuahua // or / a / muffin. / Or / a / puppy / or / a / bagel. / Reading
 / comments / from / someone / you / barely / know // posting / about /
 something / you / don't / care / about. / Telling / 647 / people / what's / on /

your / mind. / Reading / what's / on / the / mind / of / 647 / people. / Reading / a / tremendous / of / opinions / about / politics. (An anticipating sound effect follows right before the transition) // (Clock ticking sound begins) Time is precious. //// (Clock ticking sound continues) Are we running today? //// (Nike logo appears while the alarm goes off loudly.)

1) Simplicity

The core message that “time is precious” is effectively delivered at the end of the video with an impact after a series of build-ups around the ways people spend their time on the screens. The simplicity of the video is also shown through the visual design, which only consists of black and white colour with the same typography in the same position from the beginning to the end of the video. The robotic narrative which is monotone, which creates a slightly comical effect in combination of the copy it reads, also takes a part in the simplicity of the video.

2) Unexpectedness

The unexpectedness in the video is effectively achieved through the copy written for the narrative, which generates enough interest and curiosity. It is also achieved by the speed of transition between the words, e.g., pausing slightly longer at certain points and starting rapidly again. The curiosity and the interest aroused from the unexpectedness of the copy is magnified by the relatively longer pause before the transition. Attention is effectively captured and maintained throughout the video, also because the speed increases more and more towards the end.

3) Concreteness

The concreteness is shown through the descriptive nature of the copy which frequently talks about real life actions that remind the audience of their own common online behaviours, such as “scrolling stuff,” “clicking stuff,” “watching shows,” “swiping left,” using real life examples as shown in “...watching other people’s pictures of their Caffè Macchiato...,” or “...deciding if a picture is a Chihuahua or a muffin.”

4) Credibility

The internal credibility is established firstly through the hard numbers which tell the audience how much time is wasted on the screens, as shown in, “That’s 152 days a year,” or “...32 years of your life scrolling stuff.” It is established secondarily through the details, as shown in, “watching a year’s worth of one show about a Colombian man...,” or “telling 647 people what’s on your mind.”

The numbers and the details in the real-life contexts are closely relevant to the target audience. This gives room for the audience to see whether they are believable, which certainly and effectively prove to be so.

5) Emotions

The emotions are elicited through the speed which creates a sense of urgency and excitement, and by the acceleration of the speed towards the end of the video. The effect is backed up by the sound effects which are clock sounds—ticking sound for building up a sense of anticipation, loud alarm sound for urgency which acts as a call-to-action.

6) Stories

The copy for the narrative is a storyline, which is about “how people waste their time on the screens.” The storyline can be divided into two parts—simulation part and inspiration part, having the line “Time is Precious” as the point of division. Before the line, the audience can easily imagine themselves doing exactly the same as the copy describes.

In other words, the brain is simulated following the storyline almost as if it is experiencing what is being told (Widrich 2016; Heath, C. & Heath, D. 2007, 206). At the point where the line “Time is Precious” appears, the audience have got enough sense of “how we waste our time on the screens,” having been primed for the action up to that point. The final line “Are we running today?” inspires the audience to take the action, which is, “running.”

3.2.2 APPLE - Meet iPhone X

Apple’s “Meet iPhone X” video was released in September 2017 for the introduction of the new product, iPhone X (Meet iPhone X – Apple, YouTube 2017). In the video, the product and its new functions and features are introduced with the dynamic use of typography in motion graphics. The video reached over 18 million views on YouTube.

Main feature of the video is glossy-looking visual effects through edgy, creative motion graphics (picture 3), which is well-aligned with Apple’s brand image. Based on the data provided by Dudovskiy (2017), it can be inferred that the characteristics such as self-

expression as shown through the demonstration of “Animoji” may have been intended to target Apple’s customer segment.

The visual aspect strongly sets the tone of the video, along with the typography that acts fast dynamically and meaningfully in the screen to the upbeat background music. Color scheme of the typography follows the tone of the video, which is white, pink, purple, and blue (picture3). Gradient effects are consistently applied in the typography throughout the video.

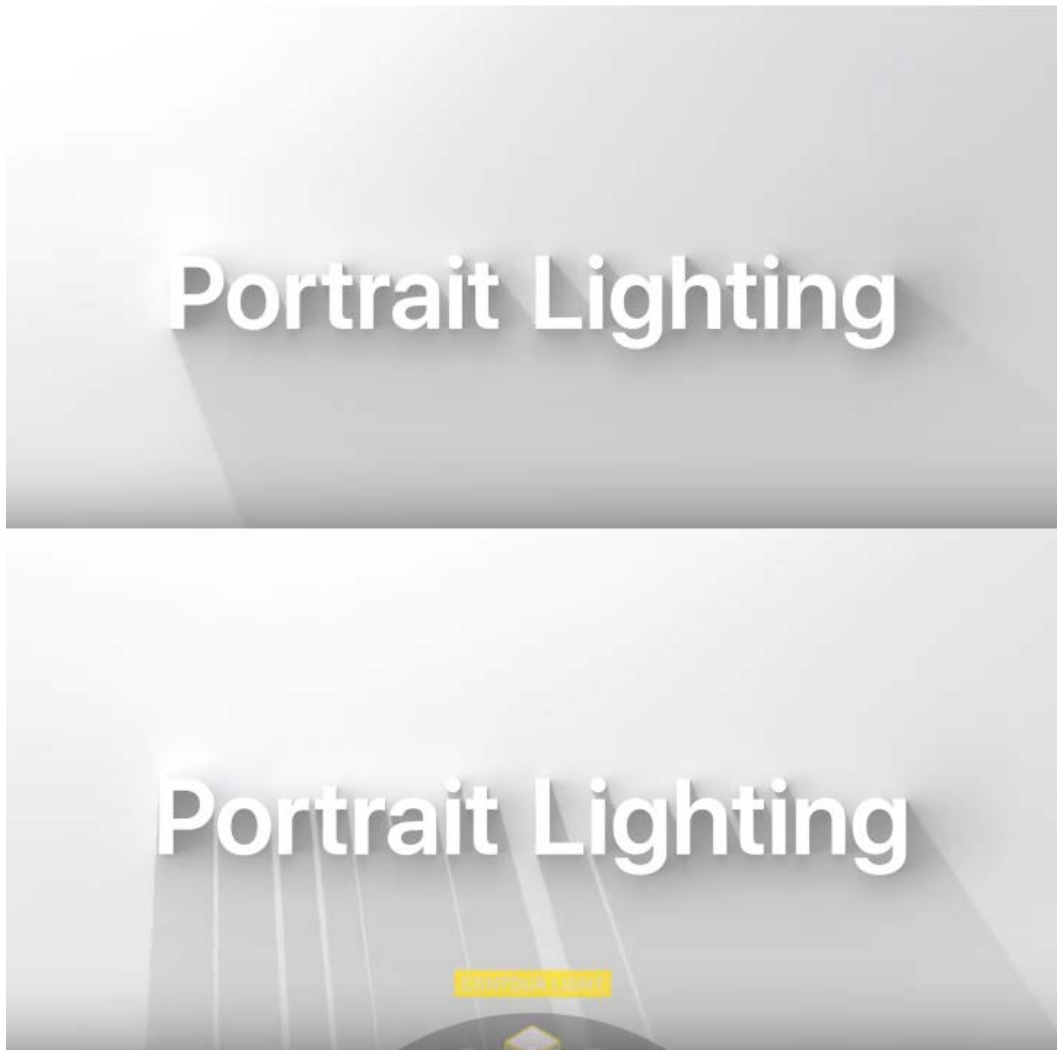


PICTURE 3. Screenshots of the visual effects in motion (Meet iPhone X – Apple, YouTube 2017)

The typography in the video does not have a narrative voice. The typography moves dynamically, often with meaningful motion graphic effects and sound effects that correspond to the meaning of the word or the action (picture 4; picture 5), in coordination with other actors and sound elements including the background music.



PICTURE 4. Screenshots of the man's bumping into the "durable glass" (Meet iPhone X – Apple, YouTube 2017)

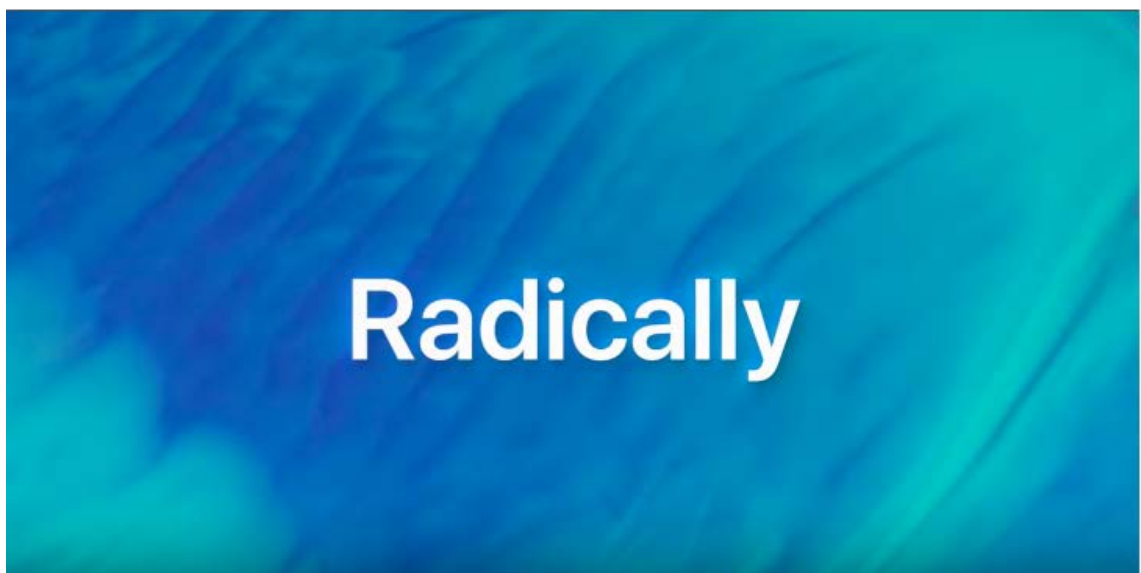


PICTURE 5. Screenshots of the meaningful effects on the typography (Meet iPhone X – Apple, YouTube 2017)

Throughout the video the background is mostly maintained in white color, but its color boldly changes whenever necessary (picture 6; picture 7).

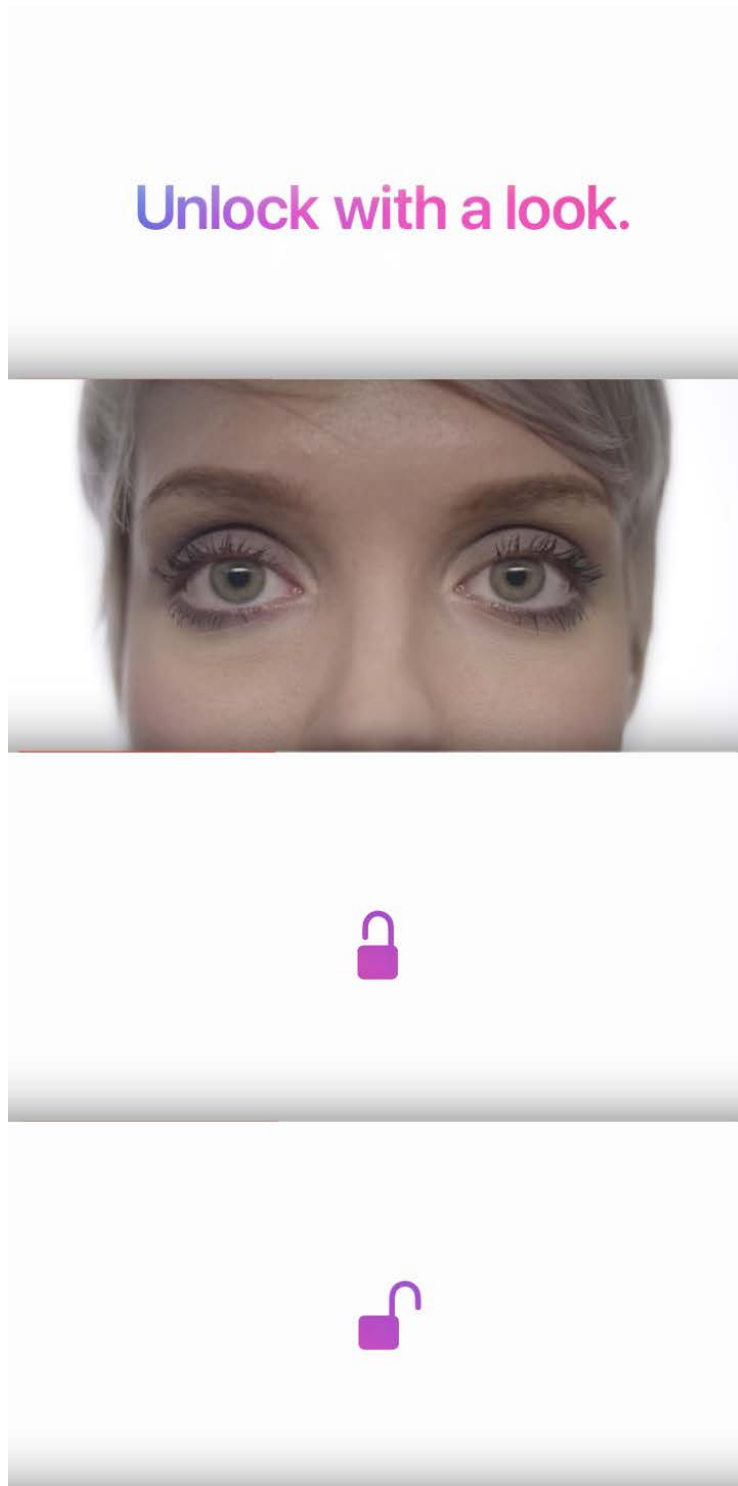


PICTURE 6. Screenshot of the simple background in white color (Meet iPhone X – Apple, YouTube 2017)



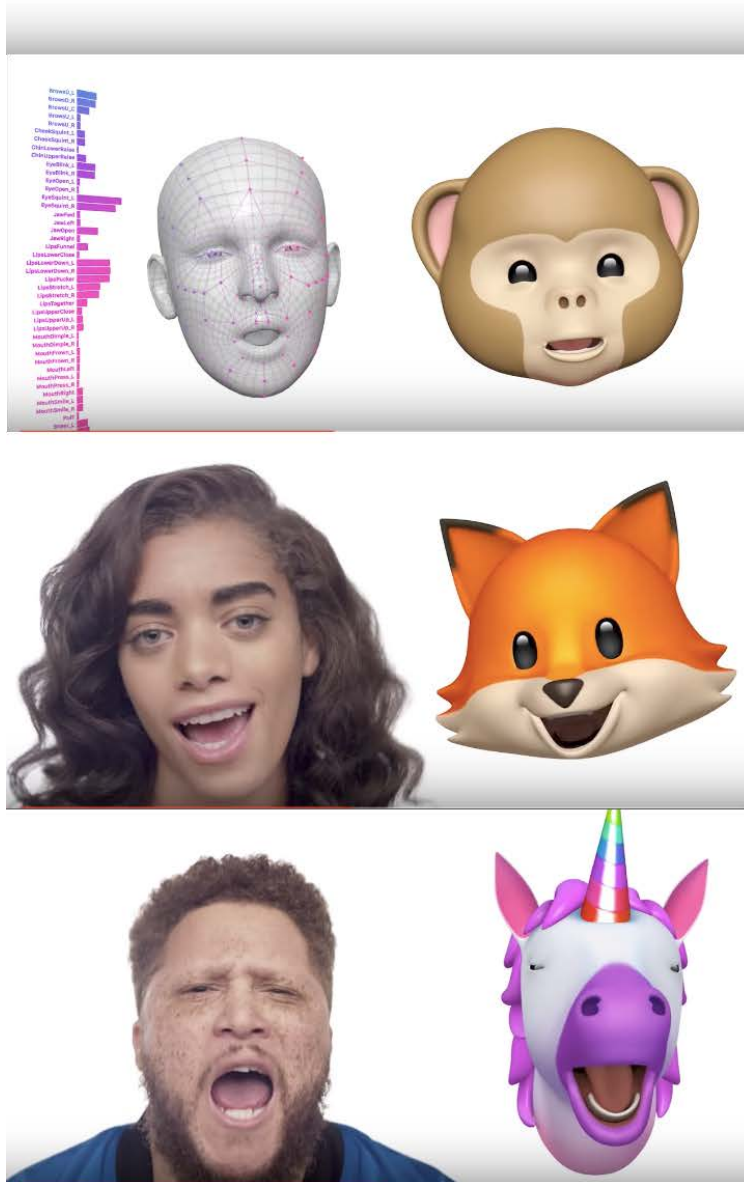
PICTURE 7. Screenshot of the bold change in color from white to blue (Meet iPhone X – Apple, YouTube 2017)

The motion graphic effects are used abundantly from the beginning to the end of the video, for introducing the features and the functions through the demonstration and the presentation (picture 8; picture 9; picture 10).

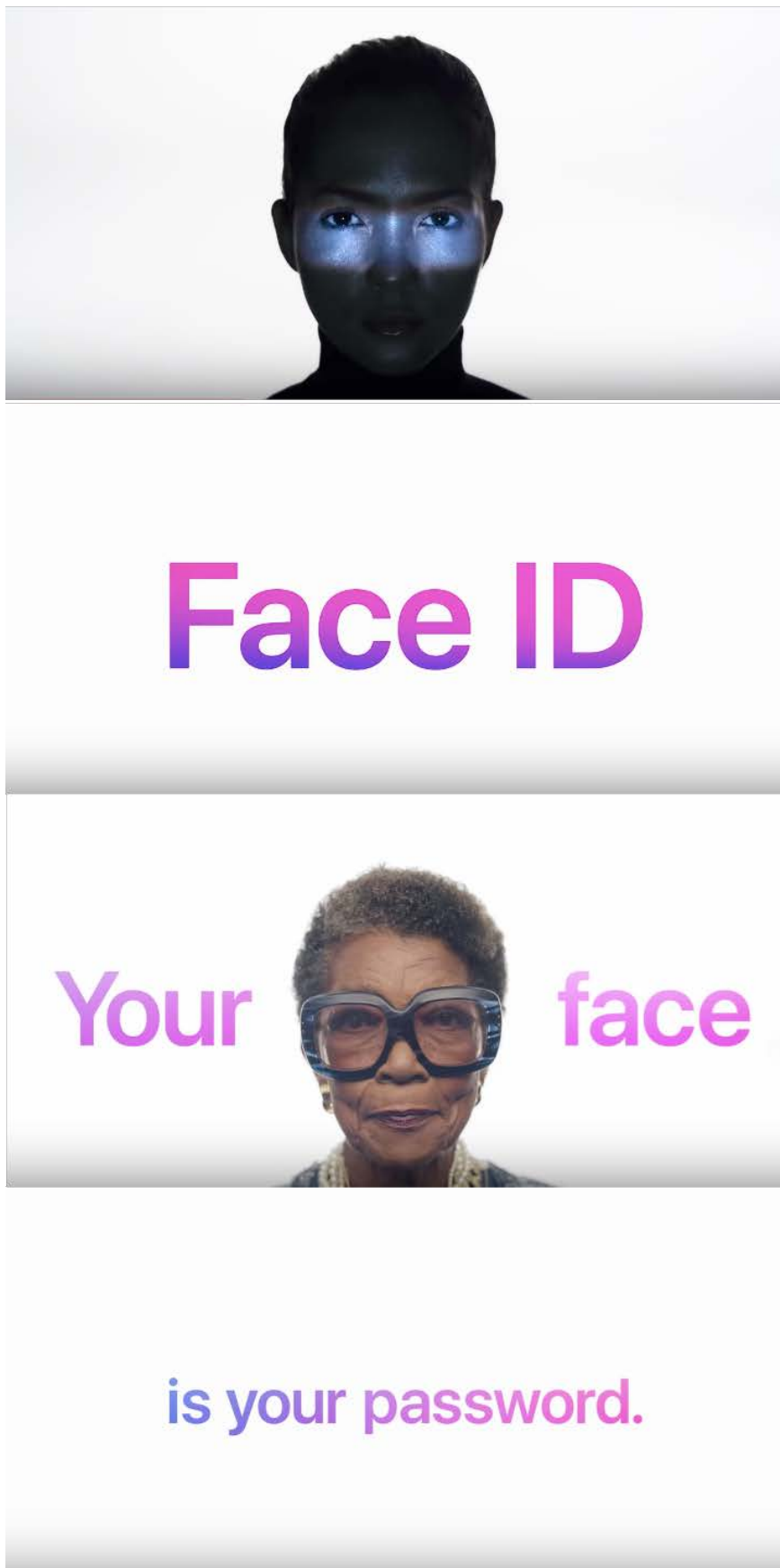


PICTURE 8. Screenshots of the demonstration of “unlock with a look” function (Meet iPhone X – Apple, YouTube 2017)

Animoji yourself.



PICTURE 9. Screenshots of the demonstration of “Animoji yourself” (Meet iPhone X – Apple, YouTube 2017)



PICTURE 10. Screenshots of the presentation of “Face ID” (Meet iPhone X – Apple, YouTube 2017)

1) Simplicity

The core idea of the video is “meet iPhone X” which is the title of the video. The video is full of demonstration and presentation solely focused on the purpose of introducing the brand-new product iPhone X, without having any element that does not serve a purpose. In this respect, the simplicity of the video is effectively achieved. From visual point of view, the white colour in the background throughout the video helps to maintain the sense of simplicity, despite the abundance of graphic effects.

2) Unexpectedness

The video captures the attention of the audience by the exuberant visual effects from the beginning, and maintains the attention to the end through active movements of the main actors in the video by means of motion graphics. The transitions by bold changes in color, the kinetic typography and the synchronization between the music and the actors effectively serve the principle. In addition, the new features and the functions by their very nature provide enough interest and curiosity for the audience.

3) Concreteness

The presentation and the demonstration in the video are strongly action-based; The hand that swipes the screen upwards in the beginning to demonstrate how to start using the phone without the usual “home button” of iPhone, the hand putting the phone down for wireless charging, the people and the animated emoji singing along to the music to demonstrate “Animoji” (picture 9), and the presentation of “portrait lighting” and “augmented reality” function are all examples of the concreteness in the video. The video is also active in terms of giving the audience sensory information through the exuberant visual effects, the animation, and the background music.

4) Credibility

The credibility comes from the stance the company Apple takes in the industry as the symbol of innovation and creativity.

5) Emotions

The kinetic typography in the video inspires excitement and a sense of urgency for the audience through speed, colour, and graphical effects. The upbeat background music by artist Sofi Tukker (2017), which actively participates and interacts with the main actors in the video is also a big factor that elicits the emotions.

6) Stories

The copy of the video takes the role of story in the video, in that the copy inspires the audience for the purchase by engaging them, as shown in the final line of the copy, “You’ve never seen anything like it. It’s never seen anything like you.” (Meet iPhone X – Apple, YouTube 2017).

3.2.3 BURGER KING - Loving “IT”

In 2017, Germany’s Burger King created a promotional video where its competitor McDonald’s is pranked through the clever tweak made for McDonald’s copy “I’m loving it.” The copy was tweaked into “Burger King loving ‘IT’,” where “IT” refers to the horror novel written by Stephen King (YouTube 2017).

Two spotlights were shown before the credits at the end of the film “IT” in the film’s pre-premiere in Germany (Hoffman 2017). Burger King’s choice for the place to show the advertisement appears to indicate the company’s consideration of its audience’s demographics and psychographics. Accordingly, the video’s style closely resembles that of a horror film as shown through the graphic design of the title (picture 11).



PICTURE 11. Screenshot of the video’s style (Burger King Loving “IT,” YouTube 2017)

The video starts in the beginning with a man speaking of his brief opinion of the horror film in an interview setting (picture 16), which is followed by the screen scene where the

horror film titled “Stephen King’s ‘IT’ is back” (picture 12) is shown. The horror figure in the film is a clown, which happens to be the mascot of McDonald’s.



PICTURE 12. Screenshot of the beginning of the film in the video (Burger King Loving “IT”, YouTube 2017)

The video is self-referential, in that it takes a position beyond the first-order kind, by having the inside situation where people’s reactions to the horror film are repeatedly highlighted (picture 13; picture 15), while still taking a position of the first-order kind as shown in the copy that speaks in first-person plural during the timeframe. In this analysis, due to the nature of the video, the word “audience” was only used to refer to the people inside the video, and the word “viewers” for the audience of the video.



PICTURE 13. Screenshot of the theatre scene where the audience get frightened by the clown in the horror film (Burger King Loving “IT”, YouTube 2017)

This means the video is twofold, in that there is film inside the video. The video maintains the boundary between the twofold until the moment the name “Burger King” is revealed to the audience at the end of the film “IT” (picture 14).



PICTURE 14. Screenshots of the two spotlights in the theatre scene (Burger King Loving “IT”, YouTube 2017)



PICTURE 15. Screenshot of the experimental situation where the audience’s reaction to the revelation is highlighted in the video (Burger King Loving “IT”, YouTube 2017)

1) Simplicity

The twofold setting in the video may make it seem less than simple, but the core message is clearly and directly delivered through one of the two spotlights that says, “The moral is: Never trust a clown.”

2) Unexpectedness

Curiosity is elicited from the very beginning through the man’s words, “In a horror film...you expect anything. But nothing like this.” (picture 16).



PICTURE 16. Screenshot of the interview scene (Burger King Loving “IT”, YouTube 2017)

The video frequently highlights the frightened reactions of the audience (picture 13), which captures and maintains the attention of the viewers throughout the timeframe. The unexpectedness is also in the revelation of the name “Burger King” to the audience, where the audience’s reaction is contrary to the previously frightened reactions (picture 15).

3) Concreteness

The principle of concreteness is effectively achieved, in that the audience is watching a horror film, which is an action that everyone can relate to. The concreteness is also shown in terms of sensory information given to the viewers, through the horror film’s sound effects whenever the reactions of the audience are highlighted in the video.

4) Credibility

The credibility comes from the fact that it happened at the actual event in Germany which was the pre-premiere for the horror film “IT.” This is established through the copy’s statement during the video (picture 17).



PICTURE 17. Screenshot of the typography that builds the credibility for the video (Burger King Loving “IT”, YouTube 2017)

5) Emotions

Emotions elicited throughout the video are anticipation and amusement for the viewers. The audience and the viewers share the same emotions, but the audience experience one emotion that the viewers do not necessarily experience, which is fear.

In other words, emotions of the audience towards the horror film are simply shared with the viewers of the video without necessarily having the viewers experiencing the emotions. The viewers who are the observers of the audience from the beginning to the end, share the emotional experience with the audience from a higher position. However, the speed and the points at which the video elicits the viewers’ emotions are led in the same pace with that of the audience.

6) Stories

Elements of story are demonstrated in the video, in that there is a process of building-up and a release at the end through the emotional reactions of the audience and the viewers. Given that the core message is mischievous by nature, it is hard to say that the viewers and the audience would feel inspired to take the action implied in the core message, which

is, “not trusting the clown,” i.e., Burger King’s competitor McDonald’s. However, it is clear that the video’s fundamental goal of promoting is effectively achieved by the outright pranking of its competitor.

3.2.4 VOLVO TRUCKS - The Epic Split (Live Test)

Volvo trucks’ legendary video came out in 2013, reaching over 87 million views to date. The video features the Belgian actor Jean-Claude Van Damme doing the epic split (picture 18) for the demonstration of the stability and the precision of Volvo Dynamic Steering (Volvo Trucks, YouTube 2013).

According to Michael Donoghue from Truck Trend Network (2007), truck buyers are associated with attributes such as adventure, self-reliance, craftsmanship, expertness, and a sense of belonging. Jean-Claude Van Damme’s sturdy image and an aura of complete self-reliance seamlessly fall into the big picture that features the two Volvo trucks, which appear to be an indication of the company’s consideration of its audience’s demographics and psychographics.



PICTURE 18. Screenshot of the split scene in the video (Volvo Trucks, YouTube 2013)

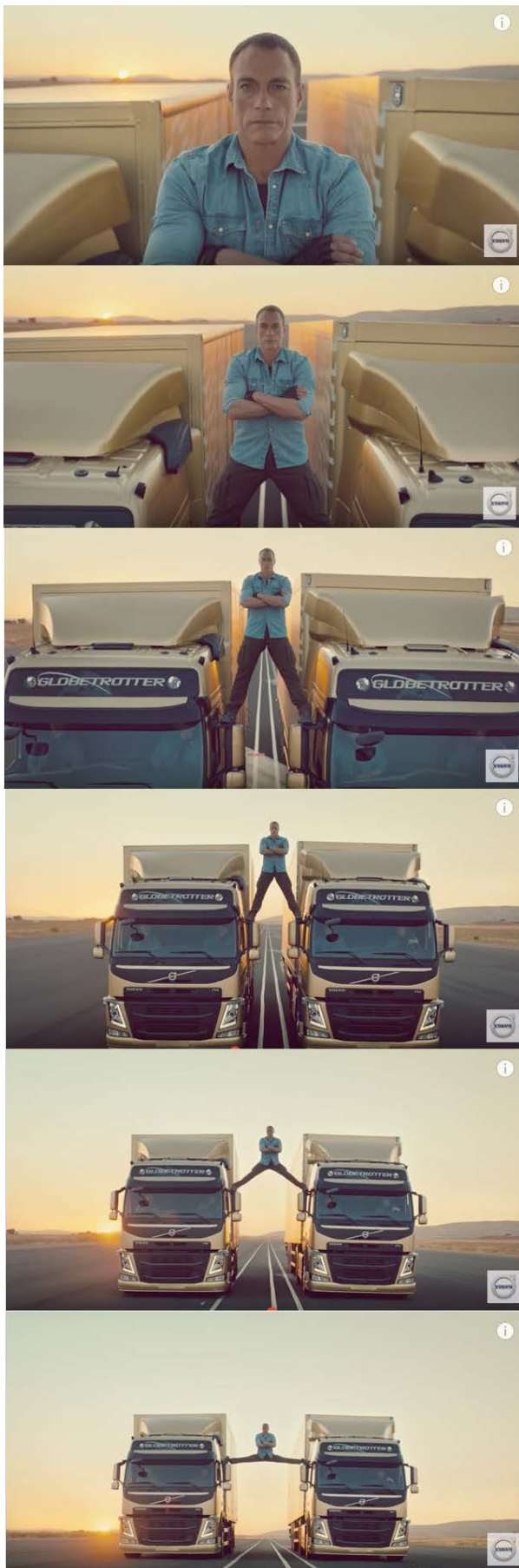
1) Simplicity

The video effectively and plainly delivers the core idea, which is “Volvo truck is stable and precise” through the epic demonstration.

2) Unexpectedness

The principle of unexpectedness in the video is shown in how the camera captures the epic scene—starting from the actor’s face, slowly zooming out to capture the whole scene with the two Volvo trucks steadily supporting the split of the actor (picture 19).

The title of the video also elicits curiosity and interest from the very beginning of the video, and the emotions are maintained throughout the video via the sheer charisma of the actor and the epic demonstration.



PICTURE 19. Screenshots of the zoom-out effect (Volvo Trucks, YouTube 2013)

3) Concreteness

The concreteness of the video is in the actor's splitting between the two Volvo trucks, which is demonstrated in a simple and direct manner.

4) Credibility

The video builds the credibility through the narrative of the actor in the beginning and at the end of the video through the text copy that appears without narration. The narrative of the actor is as follows:

I've had my ups and downs. My fair share of bumpy roads and heavy winds. That's what made me what I am today. Now I stand here before you. What you see is a body crafted to perfection. A pair of legs engineered to defy the laws of physics, and a mind set to master the most epic of splits. (Volvo Trucks, YouTube 2013)

The text copy says, "This test was set up to demonstrate the stability and precision of Volvo Dynamic Steering. It was carried out by professionals in a closed-off area." (Volvo Trucks, YouTube 2013). The detailed descriptions given by Volvo Trucks also provide the credibility.

5) Emotions

Through the epic demonstration the video elicits emotions such as amazement, admiration and trust. The background music which is "Only time" by the artist Enya sets the emotional tone for the video, eliciting a sense of transcendence, which aligns well with the demonstration in the video.

6) Stories

The narration of the actor speaks of life's hardships and explains what the audience is about to see before the demonstration, which engages and builds anticipation for the demonstration.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The aim of the thesis has been to provide insights for small businesses in order to help them make better decisions in creating visual communication as part of their marketing efforts.

To look at the cases of effective visual communication closely, the four promotional videos have been analysed based on the “Six Principles of Sticky Ideas,” which are simplicity, unexpectedness, concreteness, credibility, emotions and stories (Heath, C. & Heath, D. 2007).

Based on the analyses, it has been found that the “Six Principles of Sticky Ideas” can be a reliable criterion to judge effectiveness of a promotional video, and that each video delivers its core message by intrinsic consideration of each audience’s demographics and psychographics.

The findings indicate that creating effective visual communication requires a holistic approach, and that such efforts are in close relationship with creating successful marketing strategy.

The four promotional videos belong to the big businesses, namely, Nike, Apple, Burger King and Volvo Trucks, which may discourage small businesses because of an assumption that only big businesses can afford such promotional videos.

In that regard, it may be worthwhile to note that the two existing theories on which the thesis was built, namely, “Two Pillars of a Successful Marketing Strategy” and “Six Principles of Sticky Ideas,” are from the books intended for small business owners and everyone else.

That is to say, small businesses will be able to gain something of value from the analyses of the promotional videos, which are examples of effective visual communication in marketing, by looking into possibilities of creating their own impactful contents.

5 DISCUSSION

This bachelor's thesis was built based on the existing theories in the field of marketing and communication. That being said, it should be noted that there have not been many previous studies on "video as a marketing communications tool."

The author has found that there are many existing studies on social media marketing in connection with video, which may suggest that the significance might be in "social media" rather than "video" itself. Another indication is also in the note in the survey named "Content Marketing and Distribution,"—referred in the thesis—which says that creating a great content alone does not make it effective, but that the content has to go with a distribution plan (Ascend2 2017, 9).

There have been limitations to the thesis, in that the four promotional videos were selected for the analyses based on popularity and amount of positive responses on social media, rather than each video's achievement in increasing profits. Further studies may be done, with a strong emphasis on quantitative data that concerns the latter, which may prove to be more valuable to businesses.

With regard to the conclusions of this thesis, it may be worthwhile to consider the author's assumption, which is, "creating an effective promotional video is on the same conceptual level with creating an effective visual communication." That is to say, what makes a promotional video effective may or may not apply to other forms of visual communication. Further studies may be done to explore other forms of medium.

Demographics and psychographics aspects in each analysis were taken notice of, but the limitation was in the difficulty of determining the degree to which they are applied, as it was only possible to look for relevance, or indication in each example. This limitation may be overcome by further studies that go beyond the scope of this thesis, for instance, through conducting interviews with the makers of promotional videos.

The concepts of storytelling and customer emotions were included in the thesis as they have connection to the two principles out of the "Six Principles of Sticky Ideas" used for the analyses. However, the limitation is in that the two concepts were covered only to an

extent. Both storytelling and customer emotions can be studied and researched with more depth.

Despite the limitations, the value of the thesis may come from the fact that the popularity of video contents is evident in today's digital era. It is an exciting challenge for small businesses, as the advancement of visual contents may only be limited by the advancement of technology.

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