

## Why video is today's hottest communication tool

[Susan Deller](#) | September 30, 2015



Let's face it: no one really wants to spend precious time reading about their pension and benefit plans. Pensions and benefits are boring, and sometimes downright depressing. To make matters worse, the content is often beyond the literacy skills of the plan members we're trying to reach.

This helps to explain why a growing number of plan sponsors have begun to integrate video into their communication strategy. Done right, video allows us to package up complex ideas in a simple and entertaining format. But that's not the only thing that has propelled video to the top of the information delivery charts. Convenience, portability and shareability are also key.

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Just a few years ago, most Internet users simply didn't have the bandwidth to stream large, high-quality video files. Now, we can play videos quickly and easily on just about any device, including smartphones and tablets. Add in the power of social networking to share videos, and you can begin to understand why YouTube has become one of the most popular information sources on the planet.

Most of us absorb information faster and retain it longer if we can see and hear it rather than just read about it. And if a picture is worth a thousand words, a video is worth about 1,800 pictures (or frames) a minute. Moreover, as we adapt to the communication needs of millennials, we need to move away from telling through things like newsletters, and toward showing and sharing through social media, online communication and video.

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Of course, not all videos are created equal. Making a video that connects with viewers and helps them get better mileage from their pension and benefit plans requires:

- a deep understanding of the subject matter;
- the ability to translate complex technical jargon into plain and compelling language;
- the creative talent to bring pension and benefit plan provisions and rules to life through animation; and
- the experience to know that a "live" video built around a key plan spokesperson can establish the appropriate tone and put a much-needed face to the plan in certain circumstances, like benefit reductions.

Length is also critical. Viewer tolerance and attention spans for anything longer than a few minutes is extremely limited, especially if the video is being viewed on a handheld device. If

your message can't be effectively summarized in a two-to-three minute clip—or less—you should consider launching a series of videos that break up the content into easy-to-digest pieces. That said, you can pack a lot of information into just a couple of minutes of video.

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But merely creating a video isn't enough. You need a strategy for promoting and sharing your videos. Email and social media are the obvious choices, but some older, more traditional communication media can also play an important role. Free apps like Layar allow your members to launch a video directly from printed materials such as a newsletter, statement or poster. It's fun way to spread your video messages and get members talking.

The best way to incorporate video into your plan communication is to start small like most successful directors. Create one video, test it on your audience to find out what works and what doesn't—and then build those lessons into your sequels.

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