



# Brand Affinity Marketing

BY WISTIA



# The Brand Affinity Marketing Playbook

By Wistia

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# The Problem

# Digital advertising doesn't make people like you



Digital advertising is an amazing marketing tool for generating awareness of your business. It can help you get your solution in front of an audience precisely when they're looking for it and can be used to pique interest about a specific product or service.

But it doesn't make people like you.

In 2019, when the world's collective knowledge is available at our fingertips and the web is saturated with ads of all shapes and sizes, users have become adept at mentally ignoring things they don't wish to see.

It's no longer the case that by exposing them to a compelling tagline or 10-second video upwards of seven times, customers will come to know and trust your company name.

## **But it's how we've tried to build brands**

This is the approach employed by most businesses looking to increase brand affinity—creating a few short, creative assets, paying Google and Facebook to provide as many small interactions with as many people as possible, then aiming for love at first sight.

**Brand Affinity:** The most enduring and valuable level of a relationship between a business and consumer is based on the mutual belief that they share common values.

Of course, there is the exception that proves the rule. Occasionally, a campaign will hugely impact a company's reputation by going viral and

achieving PR success, but these cost a fortune, and are one in a million.

The vast majority of advertising campaigns, however, have little genuine impact on the trust and affection people have for a business. To mask this problem, distribution platforms measure success with metrics like impressions, clicks and views, which weight trivial passing interactions the same as meaningful engagements.

The number of impressions is not the number of people impressed.

**Brand affinity is driven by advocacy, rather than awareness**



Almost all brand building activities are centered around increasing awareness, under the false assumption that awareness alone will increase affinity.

Brand Awareness: The extent to which consumers are familiar with the distinctive qualities or images of a brand.

Focusing brand-building activities on awareness rarely leads to an audience of advocates or super fans. Think about it this way—awareness means someone knows of your brand, and affinity means someone likes your brand.

Our perceptions of companies are not based on how many times we've interacted with them in passing, but rather the depth of our personal experiences, and the experiences of those we trust.

## **So we need a new way of building brands**

Your business will generate some brand advocates through a great product and stellar customer support. But word of mouth is not just driven by your most active and delighted customers, it's driven by anyone who has formed a strong opinion about you one way or another.

So to build a lasting brand in the modern world, we need a way to market to the circles of influence for our potential buyers and to positively dispose them to our offerings, turning our wider audiences into brand advocates.

And for individuals to become an advocate for a business, they need to feel connected to its purpose and personality.

## **The Solution**

Increasingly, building brand affinity has become a necessary component of most successful businesses. In the past, brand affinity wasn't necessarily a category of marketing—it was a measurement that was associated with retention and the ability to get repeat purchases from customers. Today, however, there is a new solution to this problem—Brand Affinity Marketing.

Instead of forcing viewers to interact with the same ad over and over again, binge-worthy content encourages viewers to spend more time with your brand and build a personal connection. Just like with your product, you can only grow demand by delivering unique content to a focused audience that resonates with their core values and identities.

What is “Brand Affinity Marketing?”

An approach to marketing where businesses create and distribute binge-worthy content with the goal of increasing brand affinity.

What does "binge-worthy" mean?

Entertaining content that is so good consumers can't help but want to watch, listen, or read a lot of it in one sitting.

## Here's how it works.

Businesses should create binge-worthy content that is:

- Based on an original concept that only your business could create
- Focused on exploring a chosen theme, not your product or service
- Intentional and consistent with a release schedule and branding
- At least 10-15 minutes long, so that it can explore a topic or tell a story fully

In order to build brand affinity—and therefore create a well-loved, notable brand—businesses should create binge-worthy, long-form content that adds value to viewers' lives and doesn't just push them towards the next stage in the funnel. You can execute a Brand Affinity Marketing strategy with content like podcasts, books, a series of blog posts, and more, but the best way to build affinity is with binge-worthy, long-form video series. This type of content allows you to communicate more personally and engage with viewers through the most compelling medium that exists today—video.

This way of thinking used to be reserved for big brands with huge budgets, but now more than ever it's critical that businesses start embracing this way of thinking and aim for the goal of increasing brand affinity. For small to medium-sized businesses, investing in Brand Affinity Marketing is the key step in being able to cut through the noise, resonate deeply with your most loyal

fans, and spread word of mouth, allowing you to effectively scale and grow an audience (and your business) overtime.

## Step 1

# Finding a niche audience

What does your brand stand for beyond your products and services? What values do you care about promoting to the world? When it comes to practicing a successful Brand Affinity Marketing strategy, identifying and understanding your business's values on a core level is key to understanding which audience is best for your binge-worthy content.

When executed well, this type of content speaks to people on a personal level and resonates with those values. To engage an audience you first have to understand what makes them tick. When it comes to determining the right niche audiences for your video series, you need to define who you're speaking to, what you're saying, and why they should care. The goal is to create a Show Positioning Statement by identifying three key elements: Audience, Insight, and Theme.

## Show Positioning Statement

Your show positioning statement can be framed as, “We connect with people who [Audience], but [Insight], by [Theme].” This statement will serve as the backbone for your video series—when in doubt, refer back to this statement

to make sure any creative decisions you make are aligned with your overall positioning.

We connect with people who [Audience], but [Insight], by [Theme].

## Audience

**A group of people who identify as part of a subculture or niche**

In order to craft your Show Positioning Statement, you first need to determine your audience. The audience you choose for your binge-worthy show should extend beyond those who are in your potential customer base. In order to create buzz amongst a niche group of people that care about more than your products or services, you need to find topics they are passionate about and then create content that addresses those topics. This is where identifying a subculture comes into play.

What is a "subculture"?

In the context of Brand Affinity Marketing, a subculture is a group of people that exist outside of your current audience that often have beliefs or interests at variance with those of the larger culture.

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By narrowing in on a specific facet of their personality and their interests, you're able to more easily uncover their motivations, their broader professional interests, or even a unifying interest shared by the group. Conduct interviews or share a survey with your best customers and find out what makes them tick. Meanwhile, look for trending topics and conversations happening on sites like Reddit and Twitter to get at the heart of what people are talking about. Once you've identified your target subculture, frame the group within the context of the broader positioning for your video series by using the "People Who" statement paired with your Insight and Theme.

Here are some examples:

- One, Ten, One Hundred: People who wish they could do big creative marketing
- Anderton's TV: People who aspire to be professional musicians.
- Whiteboard Friday: People who are new to the world of search engine optimization.
- Design Disrupters: People who aspire to be on the cutting edge of design in the business world.

**Insight**

## **A tension between desire and outcome for your target audience**

Next, you need to identify an insight about the target audience or subculture you just defined that speaks to an emotional tension or conflict that exists within their lives today. Good insights are usually revealed by landing on an aspiration that the audience for your video series is currently struggling to meet. If you're stuck between a few concepts, don't sweat it. As you create more shows for your businesses, you'll have new opportunities to create shows around positioning statements that speak to different niche audiences as well.

Remember that "People Who" statement we just talked about? Well, the "Insight" component is simply added to the end of a "People Who" statement with a "But" to indicate the conflict.

Here are some examples:

- One, Ten, One Hundred: People who wish they could do big creative marketing, but don't have the budget or opportunity to do so
- Anderton's TV: People who aspire to be professional musicians, but don't have the money for professional gear.
- Whiteboard Friday: People who are new to the world of search engine optimization, but need to know how it works to be successful in their job.
- Design Disrupters: People who aspire to be on the cutting edge of design

in the business world, but don't have access to thought-leaders and trendsetters.

## Theme

**A proposition which proposes a resolution to the insight**

The final component of your show positioning statement is the theme. The theme is the essential message that drives the content of your video series—an answer to the challenges faced by your audience. This usually starts with a verb in the present participle, i.e. an “-ing” word. If you've done the hard work of defining a show audience and insight correctly, thematic options typically reveal themselves, which gives you a series of possible creative executions to choose from (go on, wipe that sweat off your forehead). Remember, though, Brand Affinity Marketing is all about aligning with your brand values, so don't choose a theme that would create confusion amongst members of your current or potential audience.

Here's an example of how we approached our first video series, One, Ten, One Hundred:

### **Audience:**

People who wish they could do big creative marketing

### **Insight**

But don't have the budget or opportunity to do so.

### **Options for the overall theme of the show:**

- Demonstrating how to bootstrap high-end video production
- Exploring how constraints impact the overall creative process
- Breaking down the production budgets of famous creative campaigns
- Remaking famous creative campaigns with much smaller budgets

If you ended up watching One, Ten, One Hundred, then you may know that we went with the second option there and explored how creativity can be born out of constraints. With all of these elements tied together, we ended up with our final show positioning statement: “We connect with people who wish they could do big creative marketing, but don't have the budget or opportunity to do so, by exploring the differences that money makes in the creative process.”

Here are some examples:

- One, Ten, One Hundred: We connect with people who wish they could do big creative marketing, but don't have the budget or opportunity to do so, by exploring the differences that money makes in the creative process.
- Anderton's TV: We connect with people who aspire to be professional musicians, but don't have the money for professional gear, by demonstrating the impact of gear on sound quality.

- Whiteboard Friday: We connect with people who are new to the world of search engine optimization, but need to know how it works to be successful in their job, by explaining complicated technical ideas simply.
- Design Disrupters: We connect with people who aspire to be on the cutting edge of design in the business world, but don't have access to thought-leaders and trendsetters, by showcasing the innovation that's taking place today.

Pro-tip: Coming up with a great show idea is often half the battle. The success or failure of your show will often hinge on the work done in the pre-production and strategy phases, rather than what happens on camera. A good idea executed poorly will almost always out-perform a bad idea executed well, so spend a disproportionate amount of your time on research, ideation, and creative development.

## Step 2

# Creating binge-worthy content

Once you have your positioning statement in order, the next step is to come up with the creative execution of it. Now, as we mentioned before, it's possible to execute this strategy with podcasts, short videos, books, blog content, and the like, but the best way to execute a Brand Affinity Marketing strategy is with long-form video series.

**This is because episodic content gives you the ability to re-engage with your viewers and keep them coming back for more.**

When it comes to creating a video series, your mind may go to the shows you already know and love. Television has been around for many decades at this point, and the formats that have worked for broadcast television can also be adapted for a video series.

**Get your wheels turning with these binge-worthy content examples:**

Show Type: Talk Show

TV Example: The Daily Show

Branded Entertainment Example: Brandwagon by Wistia

Emotional Hook: Humor, Empathy, Aspiration

Show Type: Interviews

TV Example: Conan

Branded Entertainment Example: Coffee with a CMO by Drift

Emotional Hook: Ambition

Show Type: Gear Reviews

TV Example: Top Gear/The Grand Tour

Branded Entertainment Example: Andertons TV by Andertons

Emotional Hook: Wanderlust, Aspiration

Show Type: Product Reviews

TV Example: QVC Programming

Branded Entertainment Example: Marketing Unboxed by Zaius

Emotional Hook: Empathy

Show Type: Run & Gun Documentary

TV Example: Ugly Delicious

Branded Entertainment Example: Locals by ThriveHive

Emotional Hook: Wanderlust, Gratification

Show Type: Scripted Documentary

TV Example: Chef's Table

Branded Entertainment Example: One, Ten, One Hundred by Wistia

Emotional Hook: Aspiration

Show Type: Satire

TV Example: Veep

Branded Entertainment Example: Taking Stock by Mailchimp

Emotional Hook: Catharsis

Show Type: Drama

TV Example: Black Mirror

Branded Entertainment Example: The Wolf by HP

Emotional Hook: Suspense

While thinking through these examples from television, you might start to wonder about budget—how are you going to actually shoot this show?

There's a time and a place for high production value content, but you don't necessarily need an HBO-sized budget to create a great video series for a niche audience. If you're looking for ways to make your show more budget-friendly, try creating a multi-purpose set that you could use for multiple shows, keep your content more conversational, make multiple episodes at once, or even shoot your videos with an iPhone.

Once you've landed on the format for your show that suits your needs and budget, you'll want to give it a great name, just like you would any other marketing event, blog post, or campaign you run. The key differentiator here from a typical marketing activity, however, is that your video series should have its own sub-brand outside of your overarching company brand. This secondary brand should take inspiration from the wider identity of your business, but be able to stand on its own so that it makes sense to individuals who are outside of your current customer base.

## **Tips for creating your next video series:**

- Write all the scripts at once when creating a show that follows the same format week to week
- Create a stationary set in your office that you can use whenever it's time to shoot
- Invest in a teleprompter to help when delivering lines for episodes that are scripted
- Choose your show topic wisely, as some executions may require more pre-production time than others
- Work with the talent you already have at your office for convenience and to maintain authenticity

## Step 3

# Marketing like a media company

An integral part of Brand Affinity Marketing is how you distribute and promote your content. Media companies are already in the business of aggregating, creating, and distributing content to the masses that helps them build audiences, and now B2B and B2C businesses can get in on the action too.

The essence of a media company strategy is about driving audiences to a central, controlled location to consume content. Social media platforms are used to promote and advertise content, but all with the long-term goal of driving users to a platform where you can drive sustained engagement. In the case of a media company, that means selling more ads or content subscriptions.

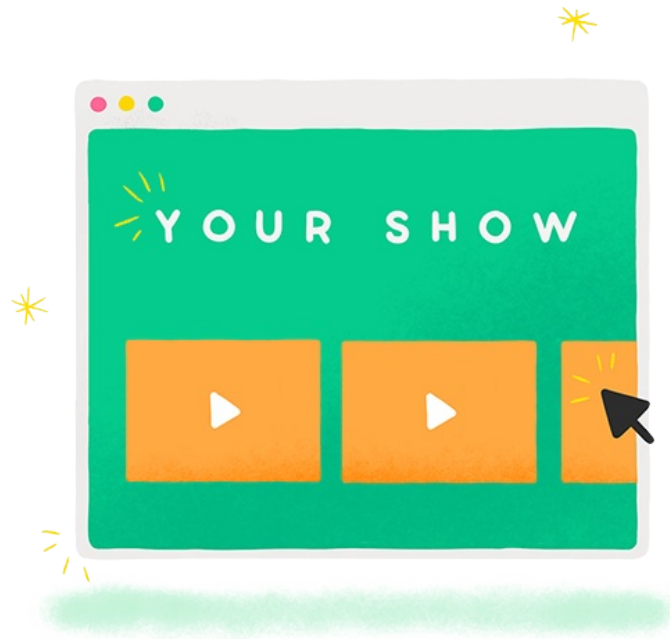
For businesses, the benefit is slightly different. While you may not be selling ads or subscriptions to your content, you still want to move audiences to an environment where you can capture as much engagement as possible, rather than constantly battling for attention against the latest amusing cat videos.

## **Brand affinity increases with time spent, not the number of touch points.**

People will typically spend way more time with content on your site than with your content on social media. At Wistia, users spend an average of 64% longer watching videos when they're viewed on Wistia.com vs our YouTube Channel (data from comparing 2 million most recent views across YouTube.com vs Wistia.com).

That's why it's important to create amazing content and then use your marketing to drive people to it. With Brand Affinity Marketing, it's all about pulling in an audience, as opposed to simply churning out more and more blog posts and content.

### **Create a destination for you video series**



The context, framing, and design all matter a great deal in ensuring consistent and lasting engagement. Your goal is to offer a lean-back viewing experience, similar to the experience offered by streaming services like Netflix and Amazon Prime, which encourages your audience to keep watching video after video. This is best achieved by creating a dedicated home for your show on your own website, as part of your overall brand and customer experience.

Just like Netflix celebrates its original content by ensuring each show has a stand-out, distinct visual brand, businesses get the opportunity to brand their own binge-worthy content with a home base on their site. Eye-catching visuals, colors, fonts, and more all serve your content in a way that supports them and lifts them up. You should still use social media to promote your content, of course, so long as you're driving viewers back to your site where you have control over the entire viewing experience.

Create a highly curated experience on your website. Brand your content in a way that matches your brand. Social media can help you drive people back to your content, where they can consume it distraction-free.

## Promote your video series



One of the main reasons why companies tend to use social media as the go-to spot for sharing all video content is the misunderstanding that the content needs to be available in full on social media in order for it to be discovered. Instead, promoting trailers and snippets from your shows works well for driving folks back to the home base on your own site. Doing so ensures that users can find your content through search and recommendations, but that if they're intrigued and engaged enough by your offering, they'll move from a social channel to an owned channel.

The best approach to promoting your video series on social media is to replicate the approach taken by broadcasters and media companies like Netflix.

Netflix uses YouTube liberally, but only to publish search-optimized video clips and trailers from their full-length content, in order to pique the interest of potential subscribers. Similarly, Facebook and Instagram are actively used to make potential audiences aware of new content during a launch phase.

When you set about promoting your show to new and existing members of your niche audience on social media, with email, and beyond, there are many tactics to consider. Most importantly, give your content an official “launch” with an announcement of the release of your content—whether you put out every episode of your show all at once, or release on a different cadence, like weekly or bi-weekly.

**Here are some ideas for how you can promote your video series:**

- Find out where your target audience likes to spend time online and share your trailer on those channels
- Use what you know about the niche audience that exists within your customer base to create lookalike audience
- Encourage viewers to subscribe to receive notifications and updates about your video series

- Build anticipation by publishing supporting, related content on your blog and on your social media channels
- Do co-marketing with any special guests or influencers you may have featured on your show
- Email your existing audience base to announce your new show, with a link to the trailer in the email

## **Communicate with subscribers**

The success of binge-worthy shows almost always rests on the power of word of mouth, but you don't have to wait until launch to get things started. Build up demand ahead of launching a new show by creating a tease trailer to communicate what's coming, build a distinct brand for your show that goes along with the trailer, and launch a “coming soon” page on your site that features both the trailer and the name of your show. Be sure to allow interested users to subscribe and receive alerts when the show launches too.

Subscriptions secured via email submission on an owned platform are worth far more than followers or subscribers on YouTube, Facebook, and more, because:

- You can email these subscribers every time you publish new content
- You can integrate these subscribers into your CRM system and lead

nurturing campaigns

- You can track their engagement and behavior on your site, which lets you offer more personalized communications
- You can advertise to these subscribers across the web, not just on the platforms they're already subscribed to

One of the best parts about creating your first video series, is that it becomes even easier to drive viewers to your content and build your audience over time once you have one show under your belt. Give your viewers the ability to opt-in for updates about the show by adding a subscribe feature to your home base. When you have that email address in hand, you're able to track how much viewers are watching, craft personalized communication based on where they are in the series, and even cross-promote additional shows you create.

You can send them things like notifications when a new episode launches, access to extended cuts of episodes, behind-the-scenes content, bonus episodes and more.

## **Build an engaged audience**

As we mentioned before, when it comes to marketing like a media company, this strategy is all about driving audiences to an owned location to consume your content—in this case, your website. Driving people to your site gives you

the opportunity to create a more curated experience, speak directly with your viewers, and re-engage with them on your own terms. When viewers visit your site to watch your video series, you control the brand experience and have more influence over what action they take next. For example, you can encourage viewers to fill out an email form and opt-in to receive notifications about when new episodes come out, when behind the scenes extras are available, and more.

Plus, once you create a number of video series, the opportunities for engagement multiply, just like they do for traditional media companies. With a few series under your belt, you're able to repeat the promotional process for each video series—promoting and cross-promoting your content to folks who have opted-in for communication. Not only are you able to re-engage with existing fans, but the relationship you're working so hard to build with viewers often inspires fans to go out and find new fans for you via word of mouth. All of this work serves to bolster your brand and help you grow an engaged audience of super fans.

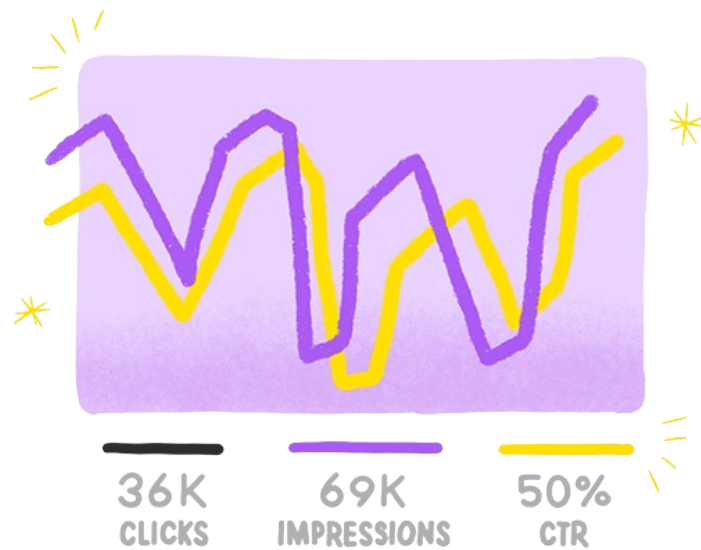
## Step 4

# Measuring resonance over reach

The more of your series people watch, the more connected they feel to your brand and your values, and the more likely they are to spread the word about your business, in turn creating the opportunity to build brand affinity. In order to be successful with your Brand Affinity Marketing strategy, you have to change the way you think about ROI to account for advocacy, rather than just awareness or conversion.

Remember that in order to build brand affinity, you have to create long-form content that adds value to viewer's lives and isn't just focused on moving them from one stage of the funnel to the next. That doesn't mean, however, that you can't measure the impact your video series has on the overall lift of your brand. To that end, there are three core metrics you should use to measure the success of your shows over time.

## Brand search impressions



This metric, which can be found in the Google search console, essentially tells you how many people are searching for terms like your brand name or show name. If your show is doing its job and improving word of mouth, this metric should increase over time, correlating heavily with the viewership numbers for your wider content.

## Time watched



Time spent with your video series is a great relative measure of the impact you've made on your niche audience. It's not about aiming for love at first sight—time spent is a good measure of a meaningful interaction, rather than engagement, which simply measures interactions. There are two ways this metric can be positively influenced—either your existing audience watches more of your content, or you're introducing new audiences to your offering. Both improving is a mark of success, and will be reflected by an increase in Time Watched over time.

This metric will tend to peak with new content releases, which is why it's ideal to develop multiple shows, and commit to a regular publishing schedule, in order that your time watched metric will increase steadily.

**It's only through time spent with your brand that someone is likely to generate true affinity.**

## **Subscribers**



This metric tells you how many people have liked your show enough to give you their email address, in order to get more content or more timely notifications. Essentially, how many fans you have acquired through marketing and distributing your show. This number is unlikely to go up each month, and will tend to fluctuate in line with new episode and show launches, which is why a cumulative view is the best way to look at it.

Linear growth in this number represents real success, as you are growing an owned audience of fans, likely to spread your message far and wide.

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## **Ready to get started?**

### **Find out how our product can help**

Start building your brand with binge-worthy content today. With our tools, you can create captivating experiences on your site that turn viewers into brand advocates.

[Learn more](#)