

Benefits of Captioning and Subtitling Social Media Videos



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In case you haven't already caught on, video absolutely slays on social media. In fact, video content, in general, is on the upswing. Cisco expects video streaming to account for 80% of all consumer internet traffic by 2020. More than 1 billion hours of videos are watched on YouTube *every day*. And as early as 2016, Mark Zuckerberg predicted that most of the content shared on Facebook for five years hence, would be video-led.

In a marketplace as cluttered as this is, how do you as a brand or an entity, ensure your video gets noticed? One way to get an instant spike in interest is to add captions and where applicable, [subtitles to your videos](#). There are a number of reasons why this would broaden the reach and the appeal of your video content on social media platforms:

1. Give a Boost to Your SEO

One massive advantage of adding captions to your YouTube uploads is that they let your videos rank higher in search results. Search engines can't understand and index videos

(yet). They can, however, index the captions embedded in them. This allows YouTube and Google to rank your video for a keyword, even if it hasn't been added as a tag at the back-end. Studies have shown that [videos with closed captions](#) receive a significant increase in views compared to those without.

2. Garner Wider Reach

Captions immediately make your video accessible to audiences, who wouldn't otherwise have been able to enjoy the content; for example – people with hearing disabilities and those for whom the language of your video isn't native. YouTube especially, allows filtering for captioned and subtitled videos for those who only want to browse through those options.

3. Target Global Audiences

[Adding subtitles to your video](#) makes it available to people in foreign markets, who although they don't speak English, might be just as interested in the subject-matter of your video. This improves the share-worthiness of your content and lends it that extra boost when it comes to virality. Not only that, search engines will index the subtitles and show your video in search results in those languages. For niche content, this can be particularly impactful, given the low competition for those keywords in foreign markets.

4. Enhance Viewer Experience

Captions can significantly contribute to the viewing experience of the average viewer, even if they're not hard of hearing or non-native. Over 60% of video views happen via mobile, and captioned videos are very useful for people watching from either very noisy environs like a train or a mall or situations where silence is important – like libraries or office spaces. Furthermore, captioning aids comprehension and memory retention for viewers, especially when they're

watching highly technical concepts being explained.

Besides these reasons, it's also important to take into account viewer behavior on different social platforms. On Facebook, for example, videos tend to autoplay on mute. Just this feature alone has led marketers to resort to increasingly inventive techniques to grab the attention of viewers scrolling through their news feed. Hotels.com received a Facebook Gold Award in 2016 for [this campaign](#), which creatively used open [captions for videos](#), designed to cut through the usual clutter. They ended up receiving five times the usual engagement rate for Facebook. Coincidence or not, shortly after this campaign Facebook began adding automatic captions for its video uploads.

Adding captions and subtitles to a video is akin to enhancing any other form of content you publish on your social handles – like incorporating imagery and embedding keywords in your blog – and performs a similar role in maximizing its reach, engagement, and shareability. And since video usage is only set to grow from here on in, it's a good idea to begin now to avoid being consumed by the deluge.