



Interactive, Entertainment, Merchandising

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## **OPTIMIZING VIDEO FOR RETAIL REQUIRES A PARADIGM SHIFT** **A retail-centric development model enabling powerful video programming content for multichannel retailers**

In a survey of ecommerce use of video completed by Future Merchants, Inc., a key finding was the distinction between **video programming** and **video technology**. Clearly reflecting the issues of ownership, budget, and existing content availability, most survey respondents discussed “video” in terms of **video technology**. This is similar to discussing Sunday circular inserts in terms of printing technology, or newspaper distribution methods.

A **video programming** paradigm begins with the need to understand the nature of **programming**. Programming is a complex process of creating content designed to achieve specific objectives; one requiring that a wide array of variables be considered and aligned in support of those objectives.

Web 2.0 technology and the advent of inexpensive production methods and techniques are bringing the cost of high quality video programming down by significant amounts. Commercial quality programming, of 3 minutes or more in length, can be created and delivered for well below the six-digit budgets of the not-so-distant past. However, commercial quality retail-centric programming content development falls outside the critical skill domains most retailers have in-house.

Retail-centric programming will not be successful by trying to push specific products. Instead, recapturing the original basis for retail brand equity (trust), retail-centric programming requires a focus on the consumer. People buy products based on *needs*. Future Merchants has developed a unique process that systematically mines activity in Social Networks and the Blogosphere to identify common challenges associated with large groups of consumers. These challenges are then translated into programming topics consumers are verifiably interested in and require empowerment around.

The programming must encompass a *complete solution* to that consumer need, delivering both the information about **how** to resolve the need as well as specifically **what** to buy. The Solutions™ service created by Future Merchants leverages this insight to create content uniquely designed to sell merchandise. Now, more than ever, it is imperative that retail brands reestablish equity with the consumer based on demonstrable benefits.....providing product *solutions* which make life easier.

Recent research shows that consumers are far more likely to trust programming featuring more than one product and brand than those featuring a single brand/product. Inherently, a single brand or product video is experienced as a form of advertising. As importantly to the retailer, the benefit of featuring multiple products or brands is that the emotional connection which *is* created reinforces the overall retail brand, not a specific supplier's.

Comparatively, retail-centric programming, such as Solutions™, is to current ecommerce website hosted marketing what limited sku-count glossy seasonal direct mail catalogs were to newspaper inserts. The real change is created by developing programs that connect with common consumer needs; an emotional connection that not only drives sales for the products integrated into the programming, and also significantly enhances the retail brand connection.

If you would like more information on this topic, or a demonstration of the Future Merchants RetailTV® technology, please call Chuck Seltzer at 631 899 4356 or email Chuck at [chuck@futuremerchants.com](mailto:chuck@futuremerchants.com)