

Video Content by Support, for Support

A conversation with Marcia Ravner and Wayne Pruski of Quest Software
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Summary of Learnings

- If you don't already, separate your support video authoring processes from marketing, especially if your video content is only published within the support knowledge base. This can help to streamline the publishing process.
- Create once and store in a central repository, then deliver it through multiple access points (e.g, corporate website or YouTube).
- Keep videos 3-5 minutes long and break into logical modules if your content requires more time.
- Provide a mobile setup equipped with everything needed to record videos and make it available for checkout.
- Provide a video authoring community forum to encourage knowledge sharing, troubleshooting and cross-department collaboration.
- Encourage managers and team leaders to regularly review SRs for trends that indicate video content opportunities.

How do your customers access the video content that you create?

Quest customers access videos in three different ways. The first option is through a knowledge base search when the video is embedded into a solution. They can also access it via our website through QuestTV. The final delivery option is through the Quest YouTube channel.

Do all the support-created videos make it out to QuestTV and YouTube?

When we first started creating support videos, the support engineers needed to get the videos published quickly (so customers could benefit from them) but found that there were significant delays in trying to meet the marketing requirements. We quickly reached an agreement with marketing, that they would not review all the videos that were published into the support knowledge base. This is particularly true of break-fix videos. When support engineers create product feature and how to videos, these typically get reviewed by the Marketing team and are released to QuestTV and the Quest YouTube channel.

Have you found you should keep videos to a specific length?

Our experience, which has been validated by others, is that video length should not exceed 3-5 minutes. If more time is needed, then it is best to break the videos into smaller segments or modules.

What tools do you use to capture and publish your videos? How did you select them?

Camtasia Version 7 is the preferred option based on input from our marketing team. They did look at other tools but liked the way Camtasia's screen capture functionality worked and how it is fairly intuitive. Camtasia also has webcam features that allow you to record a person's face and speech to text functionality. It also has the ability to video in segments, which let you use the table of contents. There are lots of training videos provided by Camtasia. One other hint, we were told that you are able to install Camtasia on two computers for each license that you purchase.

What tips and tricks can you share?

Setting the specifications for screen capture and monitor resolution is critical to creating quality video. Using a web browser with tab capabilities is helpful as well so the video author can have everything open and ready to go before recording starts. Some of our engineers use *mremote* - a remote desktop freeware application with tabbed format on remote systems with multiple operating systems. This cuts down on the dead air while you wait to connect and get the environment system established.

How do you provide the standardized recording equipment to all the video authors?

To be more cost effective, we have a mobile setup that is equipped with everything necessary to create high quality videos. This is available to be checked out as needed. It includes the computer preconfigured with the software installed and resolutions all set appropriately. It also includes the microphone and instructional and troubleshooting materials.

How do you manage the inventory of videos?

We store our videos in BrightCove, which allows us to store in a single place, yet make them visible in multiple ways for our customers.

Shortly after we started creating videos, we realized we would gain benefit by tagging video solutions in the knowledge base. This allows us to quickly identify the solutions with videos and allows us to treat them differently on our website. For

example, once we have all the video solutions marked with the special tag, we will be able to make them more visible within facets on our website.

What do others need to know about making sure the videos have good sound quality?

Through trial and error we were able to develop best practices to make sure that we have good sound quality for the videos. It is important that the video authors utilize a high quality microphone and complete the recording in a location where there isn't background noise. We have found that for our purposes the best microphone is the Audio-Technica AT2020 USB Condenser USB Microphone available on Amazon for \$100. If possible, get a boom arm to attach the mic to the mobile station to keep it in position yet not in the way.

What prompts a change in a video? How do you maintain the videos once they are created?

The most common trigger for an update to a video is a release of an updated version of the product to which the knowledge is associated. Make sure you tag your videos with appropriate metadata to allow you to locate those, which are impacted by product releases. Once we have updated the video, we retag it with updated metadata.

An update to a video could also be prompted by customer feedback.

Do you have to make your videos available in multiple languages?

We aren't required to localize our knowledge base. However, we know that others have this requirement and Yahoo! reports that they have a large challenge on how to create them and make them available.

What criteria do you use when selecting engineers to participate?

Most of the engineers who volunteered to be video authors are senior engineers who self-selected based on the recommendations of managers. In our case, most of our engineers are knowledge publishers so they have the KCS Foundations already.

How do you train the engineers who participate in capturing videos?

After the initial group of video authors was selected, they received live training. We are in the process of creating a video that will be used to train any additional engineers who are ready to become video authors.

How do you decide what videos to create? How do ideas get nominated? What criteria do you use when selecting which videos to create?

Each team thinks about and decides what videos to create by looking at the highest used text solutions and evaluating and making decisions about where videos would be valuable for customers.

Sometimes this happens when engineers are testing new releases and they identify where videos would be helpful to convey confusing setups or significant functionality changes.

What are the leading indicators that would help others know that they are on the right track with their video content initiative?

Here at Quest, we find that customers share a lot of positive feedback with support engineers. We also hear from support engineers that the videos help to solve customer cases very quickly. Each time a case is closed, engineers can add comments regarding the use of video solutions, and customers are given the opportunity to provide feedback on the case.

Of course, we are tracking the typical data points like hits on video solutions and feedback provided by customers.

What are some things you have learned about how to collaborate with the marketing teams who are always interested in the videos that get created?

Initially, the marketing team had some very strict guidelines about what they needed to post videos to Quest TV and Quest YouTube. Our engineers needed to get videos to the customer quickly. These two objectives were not always in sync. Working together, we were able to develop a process that satisfied both requirements. Support-generated videos are released straight to the knowledge base without the involvement of Marketing. Once completed, Marketing reviews the videos and if appropriate, posts them to Quest TV and YouTube.

Is this content subject to a technical review process? If so, how do you do it?

Team leads and managers work together to pick up the patterns and look at the solution hit report to make decisions about what videos to create. If an engineer determines that a topic might be interesting for a video, they vet it with both their manager and their team leader.

Once a video topic has been identified, the video author creates the script and builds the slides from the script and works off that before making the video. Most of the video authors are senior engineers and they gather input from others as needed while creating and reviewing the script/video. Each video is reviewed by team members for accuracy.

How do you share lessons learned? How do you help each other with in the video authoring community at Quest Software?

It became apparent early on that there were many departments creating videos independently and the risk for overlap was high. As a solution to that problem, we created an internal community where all video authors from all departments can collaborate. This site offers everyone the opportunity to communicate about what videos to make, who should make them, and provides a forum for sharing lessons learned.

We also utilize a central location to store the formal training documents for video authors. The standardized template provided from marketing is shared there as well as other information to make sure the video authors have what they need to develop consistent, high quality videos.

What's next for you and the video solutions?

Our highest priority in the near term is to provide feedback to our teams that will help them in making decisions about topics for videos that will provide the most value to our customers.