

# The State of Video for 2018: Brands Are Woke

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## **Woke: Although an incorrect tense of awake, a reference to how people should be aware in current affairs — Urban Dictionary**

Alex Marin, Content Manager, [WHOSAY](#)

Brands are starting to master the fundamentals of sponsored video in 2018, according to a CommPRO and Storyhunter webinar held on March 6 in New York City.

Moderated by David Berkowitz, Head of Marketing, Storyhunter, the webinar discussed how brands balance earned versus paid media, which video formats and lengths are the most appropriate, how to leverage influencer talent to achieve campaign results and how brands are dealing with newer technologies.

Berkowitz was joined by Paul Kontonis, CMO, WHOSAY, Linda Descano, CFA Executive Vice President, Havas PR North America and Jaron Gilinsky, Chief Executive Officer, Storyhunter.

Descano opened the panel by talking about the fact that brands now think in terms of “the full complemented media channel,” including paid, owned, earned and shared media. This more holistic approach, she said, is now even discussed at the beginning of the process instead of at the distribution phase.

She added that brands are now more strategic when it comes to thinking about their sponsored video strategies. They now think about the different platforms and audiences and use contextual creativity as they build up video content, Descano said.

On the influencer marketing side, Kontonis talked about how creators’ reach is typically throttled when they publish branded content. “You are reaching a very small set of their audience at that point,” he said, adding that WHOSAY takes “a more sophisticated look beyond the reach alone.”

Kontonis said that brands should tap into the extraordinary creativity of these talent-influencers and creators who have been able to build very large audiences of engaged followers on their own, something that WHOSAY calls “talent-driven content.”



Photo by Jacob Morch on Unsplash

Gilinsky joined the conversation by saying that there are universal truths about storytelling that are prevalent for both media and brands. “Then something changes and here’s the new reality,” he said, referring to the ever-changing nature of online video and the fact that brands have to be a step ahead in order to maximize their ROI.

Berkowitz moved on to length of video. Descano said that the length of video depends on the context, intended audience, channels of distribution and the brand’s business objectives.

Kontonis said that, “One thing that has always rung true is; you make the best piece of content you possibly can, that people will enjoy and, whatever the length, they’ll watch.”

The WHOSAY CMO was then asked about the video platforms’ audience-targeting capabilities. “[They] are very sophisticated,” Kontonis said. “Having said that, your cost per view will vary according to the quality of content and how well you target the audience.”

On the subject of newer technologies, Gilinsky said that while immersive technologies provided more intense experiences, distribution was the challenge. He pointed out to the fact that people are still walking around with and addicted to their smartphones.

However, when it comes to live video, both Kontonis and Descano sounded cautiously optimistic. Live video, the WHOSAY CMO said, was good as a complement to an overall strategy. And, though he signaled legal and logistical challenges to the live broadcasting of marketing activations, Kontonis reminded us they have their place—especially around tentpole and other types events where talent, consumers and brands interact in a physical space such as a brick and mortar store. “Live video can extend the reach of the event,” he added.

Descano, who agreed on the challenges of live video, also said that these could be minimized by taking them into account during the planning phase and preparing for them. “It’s all about being thoughtful and having these responses ready,” she concluded.