

THE USE OF VIDEO MARKETING IN THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY OF BUSINESS UNIVERSITIES

WYKORZYSTANIE WIDEO MARKETINGU W STRATEGII KOMUNIKACJI UCZELNI BIZNESOWEJ

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of video marketing in the communication strategies of Polish business universities as they navigate the competitive higher education market. The research examines the practices of five leading Polish business schools, benchmarking them against London Business School (LBS), a prominent European institution. Using qualitative methods, including literature reviews, case studies, and comparative analysis, the study identifies key elements of effective video marketing, such as campus presentations, interviews, event recordings, and promotional content. The findings may be useful for universities aiming to improve their operating strategies. The article also includes practical recommendations for measures to improve the effectiveness of marketing communication efforts within educational institutions.

Key words: higher education institutions, e-marketing, marketing communications, social media, video marketing.

ABSTRAKT

Niniejsze badanie analizuje rolę wideo marketingu w strategiach komunikacyjnych polskich uczelni biznesowych, które funkcjonują na konkurencyjnym rynku szkolnictwa wyższego. Badanie obejmuje praktyki pięciu wiodących polskich szkół biznesu, porównując je z London Business School (LBS), jedną z czołowych europejskich instytucji edukacyjnych. Wykorzystano metody jakościowe, takie jak przegląd literatury, studia przypadków oraz analiza porównawcza, aby zidentyfikować kluczowe elementy skutecznego wideo marketingu, takie jak prezentacje kampusów, wywiady, nagrania wydarzeń oraz treści promocyjne. Sformułowane wnioski mogą posłużyć uczelniom do doskonalenia strategii marketingowych. Artykuł zawiera również propozycje działań, które mogą przyczynić się do zwiększenia efektywności komunikacji marketingowej w instytucjach edukacyjnych.

Słowa kluczowe: instytucje szkolnictwa wyższego, marketing internetowy, komunikacja marketingowa, media społecznościowe, wideo marketing.

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1. Introduction

Today's educational landscape is characterized by the rapid development of technology and the growing role of social media as key communication and promotional tools. Higher education institutions, including those with a business focus, are increasingly turning to advanced marketing strategies to attract prospective students, increase engagement with the academic community and strengthen their position in the competitive education market. One of the most popular tools in this context is video marketing, which allows complex information to be communicated in an attractive and accessible way, while building an emotional connection with the audience.

This study examines the effectiveness of video marketing activities undertaken by the top Polish business universities and their impact on audience perception and engagement. The qualitative research used the case studies of five leading Polish business schools, benchmarking them against the practices of London Business School, one of Europe's leading business schools.

The findings may be useful for universities aiming to improve their operating strategies. The article also includes practical recommendations for measures to improve the effectiveness of marketing communication efforts within educational institutions.

2. Literature review

Defining an organization's goals in relation to customer and market needs, rather than focusing solely on the organization itself, has now become more important than ever. Marketing, as the mechanisms for achieving such alignment, has been empowered by a powerful tool: the Internet. The Internet not only facilitates the dissemination of information but also acts as a means for collaboration and interaction among users (Królewski & Sala, 2021; Berman, 2014).

E-marketing is defined as a set of informational activities aimed at meeting the needs of individuals as well as collective needs within the electronic market, using information technology to gain a competitive advantage and increase profits for businesses operating both online and offline (Chmielarz, 2007; Reed 2010). Modern e-marketing encompasses much more than just a company website and email, it also includes instant messaging platforms, blogs, online advertising, search engines, and social media (Kotler & Armstrong, 2022).

Social media marketing is a rapidly evolving branch of e-marketing that combines various elements of marketing communication, such as content marketing, user engagement, relationship building with customers, advertising, website traffic, sales promotion, video marketing, viral marketing, and public relations (Hill, 2023; Butov at al., 2020). Social media is an increasingly diverse space that encompasses categories of tools such as discussion forums, widgets, wiki pages, podcasts, blogs and digital magazines, email newsletters, crowdsourcing, photo-sharing sites, voting platforms, live streaming, presentation-sharing services, and virtual worlds (Turner & Shah, 2011; Kopera 2022). Social media platforms, with their speed and relevance of communication, stimulate innovation in companies and enable them to fully understand the needs and desires of consumers (Kotler & Armstrong, 2022; Cheung, 2019). This, in turn, allows companies to enhance their communication efforts and increase consumer engagement and activity (Grębosz at al., 2016; Hess at al.2016). Social media platforms enable companies to build dialogue with potential customers, sponsors, and investors, create brand awareness, increase sales, and provide opportunities for gathering feedback from the market (Świerczyńska-Kaczor, 2012).

One prominent trend within social media marketing is video content. The video format engages users on social media platforms and responds to the content consumption style

of today's audience (Stawarz, 2017). Video marketing can be simply described as any marketing activity conducted using the video format (Daniłoś, 2016; Tarczydło 2017). More specifically, video content marketing refers to the creation and publication of video content on a website aimed at effectively promoting a brand, product, or service (Syska at al., 2018).

An essential feature of social media, and consequently of communication through video content, is interaction – encouraging users to engage in dialogue and build relationships (Verhoef, 2021). Video marketing focuses on creating and distributing content that is useful and valuable to users, fostering close relationships with both potential and current customers (Stępowski, 2017).

The main benefits of using video for marketing purposes include the following:

- Video content is much easier for Internet users to remember.
- Video helps in building brand image.
- It can attract supporters to the brand, increasing its recognition.
- Video materials support the development of lasting relationships with customers.
- The viral nature of video allows for reaching a wide audience.
- It increases user engagement.
- It facilitates interaction between the brand and the customer.
- It generates significant traffic (Tobiasz & Szymański, 2016; Reed, 2010).

The most popular platforms for video marketing currently include Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, Pinterest, and LinkedIn. Depending on a company's goals, the video format can be harnessed in various ways to showcase products or services and increase brand recognition. To differentiate advertising formats in online video advertising, various classifications can be applied. Key factors determining the categorization of online video ad formats include the placement of the ads, the surrounding context, and the timing of the broadcast (Reed, 2010).

The trends that are shaping the future of video marketing in the coming years include the following (Skwarek, 2022):

- Short videos, such as those on TikTok, Instagram, or Twitter, are gaining increasing popularity. Users often have limited attention spans, making shorter videos more engaging and attention-grabbing.
- Real-time video, or live streaming, is becoming more popular as a tool for direct audience engagement. Companies can host live broadcasts for events, product showcases, Q&A sessions, and various other interactive formats.
- User-generated video content, created and shared by internet users themselves, has the potential to build authentic engagement and trust. UGC (user-generated

content) can be useful for showcasing customer testimonials, product reviews, and creating a community around a brand.

- Personalization is a key aspect of effective video marketing. Brands will increasingly strive to create video content tailored to specific target groups, which may include personalized messages, offers, or product recommendations.
- Interactive videos that engage viewers in an active way provide an advantage over passive viewing materials. Technologies such as 360-degree video, viewer-selected video options, and video quizzes allow content creators to produce more engaging and interactive films.

These trends highlight the increasing importance of video marketing as an effective tool for reaching customers, building engagement, and strengthening brand presence. Given that technology and audience preferences continue to evolve, further innovations in the field of video marketing can be expected. The current education market is marked by rapid transformations driven by technological innovations and shifting societal demands. Within this landscape, educational marketing is essential for shaping the reputation of higher education institutions and drawing in prospective students. Innovative communication methods, particularly video marketing, are emerging as highly effective promotional tools (Miller, 2011; Flannery 2021).

3. Methodology

This study investigates the effectiveness of video marketing activities undertaken by Polish business universities and their impact on audience perception and engagement.

The research problem addressed herein concerns the use of video marketing by Polish business universities in the context of strengthening their position on the higher education market. The following research questions were formulated: 1) How do Polish business schools use video marketing in their communication strategies? 2) What are the key elements of effective video marketing activities in an educational context? 3) What impact do video marketing activities have on audience perception and engagement?

The aim of the research is to identify and evaluate the video marketing activities undertaken by Polish business schools and to assess their effectiveness in terms of image building and audience engagement. The following research methods were used: a literature review to formulate the research problem and research questions, comparative analysis of case studies concerning five leading Polish business schools, and benchmarking with London Business School, one of Europe's leading business schools.

The findings may be useful for higher education institutions aiming to improve their operational strategies. The article also proposes practical recommendations for measures to improve the effectiveness of marketing communication efforts within educational institutions.

4. Selected universities benchmarked

This study analyzes the video marketing activities of five leading Polish business universities:

1. Warsaw School of Economics (SGH)
2. Kozminski University (ALK)
3. Krakow University of Economics (UEK)
4. Wroclaw University of Business and Economics (UEW)
5. Poznan University of Economics and Business (UEP)

To provide an international perspective, a benchmarking exercise was conducted with a sixth higher educational institution – London Business School, one of Europe’s leading business schools. This comparison highlights how these institutions in Poland compare against an internationally renowned competitor in terms of the effectiveness of the video marketing strategies used. The business universities analyzed and their social media platforms activity are presented below.

Table 1. Social media platforms used by business universities and their popularity. (in thousands)

	SGH Warsaw School of Economics	ALK Kozminski University	UEK Krakow University of Economics	UEP Poznan University of Economics and Business	UEW Wroclaw University of Business and Economics	LBS London Business School
YouTube Subscribers	4.9 K	3.33 K	1.53 K	1.87 K	1.02 K	290 K
Instagram Followers	15 K	17 K	56.3 K	8.3 K	8.5 K	136 K
Facebook Followers	61 K	47 K	38 K	37 K	39 K	359 K
LinkedIn Followers	142 K	79 K	67 K	54 K	60 K	556 K

Source: based on information gathered from business universities’ social media platforms, as of Nov. 25, 2024

The aim of the analysis is to identify how these institutions use video marketing as part of their marketing strategies on social media platforms. By comparing marketing activities, this study seeks to identify best practices and areas for improvement, which can ultimately serve as a valuable resource for universities seeking to optimize their video marketing strategies.

The following sections of this article will discuss the marketing activities of each of the selected universities, with a particular focus on their specific approach to video marketing. This examination will not only shed light on the individual strategies employed by these institutions, but also seeks to capture wider trends and challenges in the use of video for social media marketing in the education sector.

5. Evaluating the video marketing performance of selected universities

In the context of universities and colleges, video marketing serves several functions. First and foremost, it allows for effective presentation of the educational offerings, infrastructure and academic life to prospective students. In addition, it enables the university to project an image as a modern and dynamic institution capable of meeting the challenges of the contemporary educational market. Beyond recruitment, video marketing is also an important tool in building emotional ties with current students, alumni and business partners.

To provide a structured analysis, four main aspects of video marketing activities have been selected for benchmarking: 1) presentations of the campus and infrastructure, 2) interviews with lecturers and students, 3) recordings of cultural and scientific events and 4) short promotional videos presenting the unique features and advantages of the university.

5.1. Campus and infrastructure presentations

Campus and infrastructure presentations are a key element of video marketing, as they allow prospective students and other stakeholders to experience the physical environment of the university. Showcasing the ensemble of campus facilities, lecture theatres, laboratories and recreational spaces can increase the attractiveness of the university and influence decisions on where to study.

Table 1. Campus presentation and infrastructure.

	SGH Warsaw School of Economics	ALK Kozminski University	UEK Krakow University of Economics	UEP Poznan University of Economics and Business	UEW Wroclaw University of Business and Economics	LBS London Business School
Videos with aerial shots	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Virtual walks	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Lecture halls	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Recreational spaces	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Regular updates	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Movies in different languages	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Interactivity of materials	Very advanced	Very advanced	Advanced	Advanced	Very advanced	Very advanced
Professional production	High level	High level	Medium level	Medium level	High level	High level

Source: this table (and subsequent tables) based on the universities' websites (Warsaw School of Economics, 2024; Kozminski University, 2024; Krakow University of Economics, 2024; Poznan University of Economics, 2024; London Business School, 2024; Wroclaw University of Economics, 2024), as at August 5, 2024.

As the comparative analysis shows, most of the Polish business universities examined, including SGH, UEK, UEP and UEW, actively use video marketing to present their campuses and infrastructure. All these universities regularly update their video materials, which is crucial to maintaining an up-to-date image in the eyes of prospective students. However, only SGH offers virtual tours, which distinguishes it from other universities (suggesting an opportunity for the latter to further develop their online presentation tools).

In terms of interactivity and professionalism of production, all the universities exhibit a commendable level of quality, but SGH, KU and UEW stand out for the particularly advanced interactivity of their materials. Multilingual video content is available from most of the Polish universities, although CUE could broaden its global reach by incorporating this feature. London Business School, although it does not offer virtual tours or videos with aerial shots, compensates for this with very advanced interactivity of materials and a high level of professionalism in production, which puts it at the forefront in terms of global video marketing standards.

In sum, while all the business universities analyzed do use video marketing effectively, features such as advanced interactivity, professional production and the availability of materials in various languages determine their effectiveness on the global educational market. The Polish business universities have a strong position, but they can still benefit from further optimization of their strategies, drawing inspiration from institutions such as London Business School.

5.2. Interviews with lecturers and students

Interviews with lecturers and students are an effective video marketing tool, focusing on the human side of the university. Such videos highlight not only scientific and teaching achievements, but also personal experiences and stories. Such content can build emotional bonds with current and future students and increase the university's credibility and appeal.

Table 3. Interviews with lecturers and students.

	SGH Warsaw School of Economics	ALK Kozminski University	UEK Krakow University of Economics	UEP Poznan University of Economics and Business	UEW Wroclaw University of Business and Economics	LBS London Business School
Interviews with lecturers	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Interviews with students	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Academic achievements	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Students' experiences	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Content	High	High	Above the average	Above the average	High	Very high
Languages of the interviews	Polish English	Polish English	Polish	Polish	Polish English	English

Source: based on the universities' websites, as at August 5, 2024.

This comparative analysis indicates that all the business universities analyzed – both the Polish institutions and London Business School – regularly publish interviews with faculty members and students. Such interviews effectively highlight both scientific achievements and student experiences, a common element that helps to build the image of the university as an academic institution of high standards.

Here again, London Business School clearly stands out in terms of content quality and the multilingual nature of its interviews, which contributes to its global success and wide reach. Polish universities, such as SGH, ALK, and UEW, are also well-rated, especially in terms of content quality and the availability of interviews in English, which helps them attract international students. UEK and UEP have room for improvement, particularly in terms of enhancing content quality and expanding their reach by publishing interviews in additional languages. Integrating these elements could strengthen their position on the international stage.

In summary, although Polish business universities demonstrate solid foundations in video marketing, there is still room for improvement in terms of content and language, which could bolster their competitive position in the global educational environment.

5.3. Recordings of cultural and scientific events

Recordings of cultural and scientific events are essential for building a university's image as a dynamic and active academic center. Coverage of conferences, open days, festivals, and other events allows the university to be showcased in the context of its activities beyond strictly educational ones, which can increase interest from students, staff, and external partners.

Table 4. Recordings of cultural and scientific events.

	SGH Warsaw School of Economics	ALK Kozminski University	UEK Krakow University of Economics	UEP Poznan University of Economics and Business	UEW Wroclaw University of Business and Economics	LBS London Business School
Open days	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Conferences	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Student festivals	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cultural events	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Live broadcasts	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Availability of online recordings	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Participation in international campaigns	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: based on the universities' websites, as at August 5, 2024.

This comparative analysis shows that all the analyzed business universities analyzed – both the Polish institutions and London Business School – actively participate in organizing and documenting conferences, open days, student festivals, and cultural events. All the universities conduct live broadcasts and provide online recordings of these events, which increases their accessibility and reach. London Business School and most Polish universities, including SGH, ALK, UEK, and UEW, actively participate in such campaigns, which strengthens their global presence and attracts international students. UEP, although active at the local level, does not engage in international campaigns, which may limit its reach and impact in the global education market. This shows that while UEP operates effectively at the national level, its development on the international stage may require additional efforts.

5.4. Short promotional videos highlighting the unique features and advantages of the university

Short promotional videos are an important tool in video marketing as they allow for the quick and effective presentation of a university's unique features and advantages. They can effectively capture the attention of prospective students by showcasing the educational offerings, scientific achievements, and alumni successes in an appealing way.

Table 5. Short promotional videos depicting universities' unique features and advantages.

	SGH Warsaw School of Economics	ALK Kozminski University	UEK Krakow University of Economics	UEP Poznan University of Economics and Business	UEW Wroclaw University of Business and Economics	LBS London Business School
Unique features highlighted in the videos	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dynamic narration	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Consistency with the university's image	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Specific marketing objective	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of video views	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Very high

Number of shares	Low	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Medium
Comments and engagement	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low

Source: based on the universities' websites, as at August 5, 2024.

Comparative analysis of this data indicates that all the business universities analyzed – both the Polish institutions and London Business School – effectively use video marketing to highlight their unique features, while maintaining consistency with the university's image and dynamic narrative. However, differences emerge in terms of effectiveness in reaching a wide audience.

LBS yet again stands out significantly in terms of number of impressions, scoring very high, indicating its strong global position and reach. Among Polish universities, ALK achieves the highest number of impressions, suggesting that its video marketing strategy is more effective than those of SGH, UEK, UEP and UEW, which score only medium numbers of impressions.

In terms of the number of shares and community engagement, all of the universities analyzed, including LBS, have relatively low levels of engagement, which may indicate a need to better tailor video content to viewers' preferences and expectations. The Polish business universities, in particular, could focus on improving the appeal of content to better engage viewers and encourage them to interact and share videos.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

Overall, this comparative analysis of video marketing at five leading Polish business schools and the London Business School (LBS) offers certain conclusions about the effectiveness of these activities and highlights areas for further development.

First, all of the universities analyzed make effective use of video marketing to showcase their campus, infrastructure and recreational spaces, which is key to building their image and attracting prospective students. SGH differentiates itself from other Polish universities by offering virtual walk-throughs of the campus, which increases accessibility and allows students to get an in-depth look at the university without being physically present. This approach is particularly attractive to international students, who can remotely tour the campus and learn about its facilities. London Business School, while not using virtual walk-throughs or bird's-eye shots, focuses on using advanced technology and dynamic narratives in its videos. This strategy allows LBS to capture viewers' attention on a global level and highlight its position as one of the world's leading business schools.

Secondly, in terms of interviews with faculty and students, all universities regularly publish this kind of content, which is an important part of building relationships with audiences and showcasing academic achievements and student experiences. London Business School stands out for the highest quality content of these materials, which underscores its global prestige. In addition, LBS publishes interviews in multiple languages, which makes them more accessible to an international audience and allows it to attract students from different parts of the world. In Poland, SGH, ALK and UEW also offer interviews in English, which increases their international appeal. However, UEK and UEP only publish interviews in Polish, which may limit their global reach and prevent them from reaching a wider range of prospective international students.

Third, coverage of cultural and scientific events is well developed at all the universities analyzed. Both LBS and the Polish institutions analyzed provide live broadcasts of these events and ensure the availability of online records, which allows them to reach a wider audience, including those who could not attend live events. This practice increases the involvement of the academic community and highlights the university's activity in organizing various cultural and scientific initiatives. It is also worth noting that participation in international campaigns is an important part of London Business School's marketing strategy, which contributes to building its global brand and attracting students from all over the world. In Poland, SGH, ALK and UEW are also involved in such campaigns, which strengthens their international reach and prestige. However, UEP, while active at the national level, does not participate in international campaigns, which may limit its reach and ability to reach the global academic community. In the long term, this could affect its competitiveness in the international market and limit its ability to attract international students and partners.

Fourth, in terms of numbers of subscribers and social media reach, London Business School definitely stands out as a global leader, which is a testament to its effective marketing efforts and strong position in the education market. LBS effectively uses a variety of communication channels to reach a wide audience, which translates into very high results in terms of both the number of subscribers and reach. In Poland, ALK and UEW also score high in these areas, which demonstrates their ability to run effective marketing campaigns and build an engaged community around their brands. SGH, UEK and UEP, on the other hand, are performing at an average level, suggesting the need to intensify promotional activities in social media. Better content targeting and more intensified campaigns could help increase audience reach and engagement, which could consequently improve their position in the market.

Importantly, Polish universities such as UEK and UEP should consider publishing video materials in English and other foreign languages to increase their international

reach. Increasing the number of multilingual materials could help attract more international students and partners. Additionally, UEP, which does not participate in international campaigns, could strengthen its international presence by engaging in such initiatives. Developments in this area could help increase the university's visibility in the global marketplace and build its prestige. The other Polish universities, such as SGH, ALK and UEW, should continue their activities while intensifying their social media promotion, which would allow them to achieve better results in terms of number of subscribers and reach. Strengthening their online presence and increasing audience engagement could further increase their appeal in the international market. Developing these areas is crucial for strengthening the position of Polish universities in the global education market and for increasing their competitiveness in attracting international students and academic partners.

To further enhance the effectiveness of the video marketing efforts of Polish business universities, some key strategies are recommended:

- 1) Introducing more interactive content, such as live Q&A sessions, could significantly increase audience engagement. Interactive content allows direct communication with prospective students, answering their questions and concerns in real time, which can increase their engagement and trust in the university.
- 2) Regularly publishing new video content is key to keeping the academic community and college applicants interested and engaged. Updating content, especially in the context of rapidly changing market and technological conditions, keeps audiences informed of the university's news and achievements.
- 3) Expanding reach by working with educational influencers and promoting video content on international social media platforms can help increase the university's global visibility. Educational influencers can effectively promote the university to their many followers, which increases the reach and impact of marketing efforts. International social media platforms, such as YouTube and Instagram, allow a wide and diverse audience to be reached, which is especially important for recruiting international students.
- 4) Creating personalized video content targeting different audiences, such as college applicants, current students, alumni and business partners, can significantly improve the effectiveness of marketing communications. It would be worthwhile to expand video marketing efforts with prominent alumni and business leaders, hailing from the business university and co-creating its brand. Personalizing content allows the message to be better tailored to the specific needs and expectations of different audiences, which increases their engagement and satisfaction.

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