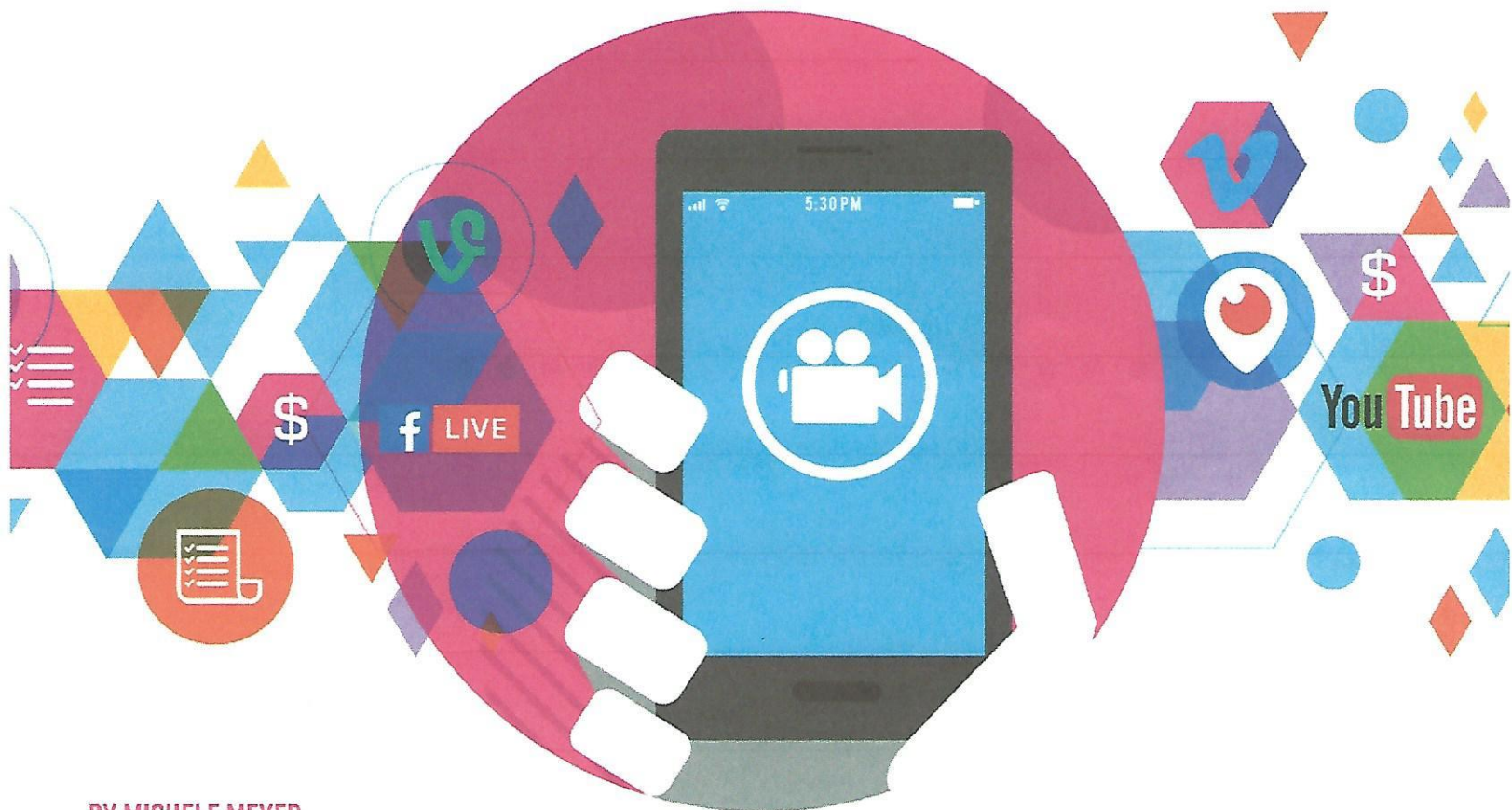


## SHOOT TO THRILL



BY MICHELE MEYER

### MAKE YOUR MARK WITH ENTERTAINING VIDEOS THAT DRAW PATIENTS IN. HERE'S HOW SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS CAN TARGET THE AUDIENCE YOU WANT TO REACH.

Over half of Americans watch on-line video daily, and 60% of corporations use it for marketing, according to the Web Marketing Video Council. If you're not flaunting video as part of your marketing efforts, you're not seeing clearly. "Given that the optical industry has such a visual product, I cannot imagine why you would not use

video," said Patrick Rafferty, partner and video producer at RaffertyWeiss Media in Silver Spring, MD. Lack of knowledge is no excuse. With a smartphone and a social media account, it's never been easier to post videos. The following review of social media platforms will help you decide which are right for you.

#### FACEBOOK LIVE

**What it is:** Launched last January, Facebook Live allows you to explain a service or reveal new product lines in real time as a scheduled event, while viewers post questions.

**Best use:** Try "Ask the Optician" broadcasts about your dispensary, or host "live trunk shows" featuring frame trends.

**Pros/Cons:** You see how many live viewers attend and their names. Just don't expect newcomers. "You're getting an audience who's already following you," said Rafferty. And while videos can reach the 90-minute mark, viewers' patience may not. Rafferty recommends keeping the videos to three minutes, max.

**Insider Tip:** Promote your event with 15-second videos on your website and Facebook pages.

## YOUTUBE

**What it is:** Launched in 2005, “YouTube is king in the video platform space,” Rafferty said. The site boasts one billion unique visitors per month.

**Best use:** Its staple is how-to videos with shelf life, so offer perennials such as how to choose frames or signs that indicate you need glasses, instead of sales.

“To go viral, have well-written content that’s funny, out-of-the-box and outrageously entertaining,” Rafferty said. For example, parodies of MC Hammer (U Can’t Read This), Vanilla Ice (Eyes Eyes Baby), The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air (“Fresh Docs of Fuquay... and Garner”) and Britney Spears (Flip the Lenses One More Time) have reaped more than 45,000 YouTube views and 30,000 Facebook views for Johnson Optometric Associates in Garner and Fuquay-Varina, NC.

“People are amused by two eye doctors performing rap,” said optometrist

(and songwriter) Andrew May, OD. He’s performed a new tune with Barrett Martin, OD, every few months since 2013. “Going to an eye doctor can be a dull experience,” May said. “We want people to have fun while getting a great eye exam.”

Parodies aren’t the only thing to post on YouTube. Visualey Optometry in Sherman Oaks, CA, aims for the heart via music, patient testimonials and the dedication of owner Lee Dodge, OD. “We wanted to show we’re real people,” Dodge said. Future one-to two-minute videos will focus on diseases and treatments.

Lambaria Eye & Optical of Davison, MI, educates on dry eyes and diabetes, with more to follow. “We hired a pro and chose key points,” said office manager Alissa McKinstry. “It felt good to keep up with the times. We’ve seen a small increase in phone calls for new patients.”

**Pros/Cons:** Competition is fierce, and while Google-owned YouTube is easy to search, it shuttles users toward content containing paid ads.

**Insider Tip:** Tag uploaded videos with



keywords, including region and topic, to snare viewers. Keep videos two minutes or less.

## PERISCOPE

**What it is:** The live streaming app, owned and hosted by Twitter, has hosted live events since March 2015.

**Best use:** Couch potatoes can attend your frame trunk shows and equipment unveilings. To score, don’t bore.

**Pros/Cons:** Periscope is easy to use, videos automatically loop, and you can edit and save your ‘scopes on other platforms. Periscope itself deletes events after 24 hours, and because it’s on Twitter, the more accounts people follow, the less likely they’ll spot yours.

**Insider Tip:** Be responsive. Followers expect replies to their comments within a day, Rafferty said.

## VIMEO

**What it is:** Vimeo supports high-definition visuals, so it is used by cinematographers and artists.

**Best use:** Only artsy, slick videos belong on this “YouTube for filmmakers.”

**Pros/Cons:** It’s ad-free and easy to use, but the high resolution comes at a price: slow uploads. The audience is small, but employers are unlikely to block access.

**Insider Tip:** A look at the “channels” reveals topic popularity.

## VINE

**What it is:** Vine’s six-second, auto-looped bits are like GIFs with sound.

**Best use:** Shock and awe, or make

them guffaw. “You have to be creative and silly, and hone your message,” said Rafferty, who suggests ECPs perform dance crazes (Whip Nae/Nae, anyone?).

**Pros/Cons:** Like Periscope, the 1.5 billion Vines that sprout daily are hard to spot on constantly changing Twitter feeds.

Johnson Optometric Associates entered 14 Vines in a *Tonight Show* challenge in 2014. While three of them made the host’s favorites page and one aired on the show itself, don’t expect future vines.

“I couldn’t figure out how to build a business Vine page, so I had to use my personal Twitter,” May said. “And we don’t need to capture youths. They’re not making appointments. Their parents are, and most adults still use Facebook. In fact, adults aged 30 to 65 interact more with us on Facebook.”

**Insider Tip:** Link or embed the video in patient communication. Embedding Vines in press releases can draw attention, as Rafferty discovered when he added a link to a release reminding seniors to get glaucoma checks.

Still unsure if social media videos are right for your practice? Remember that video is just one slice of a marketing campaign. “Give it a try and see how it works,” said McKinstry. “You won’t know until you do.” **vcprn**

Michele Meyer is a freelance writer based in Houston, TX.

