

YouTube Strategy for Dirty Freehub

The objective of the project: Determine the next steps for Dirty Freehub's YouTube channel, with the goal of increasing customer engagement.

Executive Summary: Use Dirty Freehub's Youtube channel as an experiential marketing platform. Post once a week, 2 micro videos and two interview videos. Add tagging, thumbnails, and titles. This will help gauge if you want to invest the time and resources needed to run a channel full time.

Client Description:

Dirty Freehub is a completely volunteer-driven organization. This company reviews and publishes great gravel and mixed gravel bike routes. The goal is to give back to the community and get people outside and active. All of the content provided is free and open to the public.

Who is Client:

Linda is the founder of Dirty Freehub (www.dirtyfreehub.com) which provides curated gravel bicycle routes (over 75 rides in the Western US). She's a frequent travel writer on cycling and is head of a local bike group with over 2,000 members. Linda is also on the Board of Directors for Family Kitchen, an organization that provides free meals to the food insecure in Central Oregon. And on the Advisory Board for Guardian Group which fights human trafficking in the US. She is also Co-Founder of Looking Forward, a think tank that helps make Bend, Oregon a better place to live.

Linda is also the founder of the non-profit organization LINGOs — Learning for International NGOs -- which provides online learning to 70+ international nonprofits around the world including Save the Children, World Vision, The Nature Conservancy, and Habitat for Humanity. (LINGOs has been renamed to Humentum.)

Linda founded Net Ingredients, a small web marketing consulting business. She also worked at Save the Children as an eLearning Manager. In the late 1980's and early 1990's, Linda worked at Microsoft in a variety of international marketing positions, including several years at the European, Middle East and Africa HQ where she managed 4% of Microsoft's revenue for the region. Linda has a Master's Degree in Instructional Technology from Syracuse University with an emphasis in artificial intelligence.

Research Approach:

Interviews:

I selected multiple youtube channels to interview based on the number of subscribers, video content, account description, and type of company. These channels all focus on outdoor cycling, from gear to routes, and the everyday life of cyclists. I reached out to similar channels in our niche in order to get the best advice on helping kickstart DirtyFreehub's channel.

Researching the Web:

Web research was based on a general youtube strategy. The key concepts researched included:

- Optimizing videos
- Youtube statistics
- Youtube algorithm
- Using youtube for a small business
- Marketing on youtube
- Analyzing successful youtube channels within DirtyFreehub's niche

Research Findings:

Interview questions

1. Why did you start this channel?
2. What was your initial goal in starting a YouTube channel? Were you trying to promote a brand, sell a product, share a hobby?
3. Do you collaborate with other YouTubers? If so, what types of collaboration?
4. What advice would you give to someone starting a channel for their business?
5. How did you successfully grow your channel?
6. What type of content gets the most attention?
7. How much time do you put into your channel? How often do you post?
8. What are your strategies for getting people to subscribe?
9. What are your strategies for getting more views?
10. Do you have any format guidelines that you follow?
11. Next steps For Dirty Freehub?

Interview Takeaways

SYD and MACKY:

- YouTube rewards playing time, it's better to have longer videos with fewer people watching than short ones with a lot of people watching
- Using YouTube to try and gain website traffic is not necessarily going to work. The algorithm rewards videos that keep people on YouTube, not click away. With that said, if you want to build a channel, you need to build a community within YouTube
- If you don't have a presence on YouTube, collaborating with other channels won't benefit you
- The time frame for making one video- 15+ hours of making videos, 5+ hours editing.

Video Format

- create videos of you riding the bike routes (or website users riding the bike routes) have them include everything from what they need to bring on the ride, gear, food, the distance, etc.
 - You don't need expensive gear if the audio quality is good (they mentioned wind can be an issue sometimes and suggested a tool to help fix this)
 - Introduce the person riding, so the people know who they are watching. You can have them include how they are using dirty freehub to navigate and find the routes. This way you are promoting the website without deliberately saying "go to the website"
- Vlog your bike route experience
 - start with more popular, well-known routes (or popular gravel riding areas) people tend to watch things they are planning on doing soon, then build from there

How SYD and MACKY grew their channel

- Motive- make a career out of posting on YouTube
 - Get sponsored by brands to earn income
- Channel growth came from being featured on other YouTube channels
 - first big break was when a well-known YouTuber wanted to do a video of their van they traveled in. They gained around 17k from this and have been growing

since. They had a good following before this, but they considered this as their breakthrough

Web Research

- Optimize videos
 - Video Title
 - Accurate addresses the target audience
 - Tags
 - 10-12 keywords relevant to the video topic
 - Description
 - Includes a call to action,
 - Link to website, route, etc. include URL in the first couple of lines (before the show more button)
 - “skim value” technique
 - Include keywords about the video and topic
 - Thumbnail
 - Eye catching, include text, follow a color scheme. 4-6 colors at most
https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/72431?hl=en&ref_topic=9257785
 - Cards
 - Add easy access to your website
 - Add card for another video with a similar route
 - Add card for direct link to the route
 - <https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/6140493?hl=en>
 - https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2887282?hl=en&ref_topic=9257785
- Share videos
 - website, Facebook
- Ask people to subscribe
 - In the video and in the description
 - “Subscribe for more free bike routes and reviews!”
- Optimize your “about page”

- Include additional links to Reddit and the website
- Interact with the comment section
- Partner with other Youtube channels

Option for Client:

1. Use YouTube as Platform for Linking Into Route Descriptions

Post micro-videos to the channel to use for the company website, include tagging, description, thumbnail, and proper title. Does not include a posting schedule. The channel is primarily used to store videos for other platforms.

2. Use YouTube as an Extensive Marketing Channel

Using the channel full-time to build a platform and community. Post vlogs for each route

Video structure:

- 10-20 minutes long
- Include preparation for the trial (what you are packing, what you need, type of food, etc).
Talk about the trail description, what to expect. Include places to stop along the trail, your failures when riding, conclude with an interview of the overall express and why you recommend it to your views.
- Include eye-catching thumbnails, all following a theme and color scheme
- Include click-bait title, proper tagging, and optimize descriptions

Collaborate with other channels, post 2-4 videos a month, either once a week or once every other week. Create a consistent posting schedule. This schedule should be announced on your channel so subscribers know when to check for a new video.

3. Use YouTube as an experiential marketing platform

A combination of options one and two. Post both micro-videos along with vlogs

Video structure

- Micro videos (continue what you post now)
- Interview videos
 - These videos should be a few minutes in length. Include eye-catching thumbnails, proper titles, optimize descriptions and tag the videos. Post these videos 1-2 times a month. Post micro videos on the weeks you do not post interviews.

Stay consistent with posting once a week, and announced what day of the week you post on your channel so subscribers know when to check in for a new video

4. Provide Content to Other Established Channels

Practice co-marketing with other channels like Gravel Cyclist. Create videos they can post to their channels that promote both Dirty Freehub websites along with their brand. This does not need to be done on a consistent schedule. Aim for a promotional video every other month, or whenever possible.

Projected Outcomes for Each:

1. Use YouTube as Platform for Linking Into Route Descriptions Micro Videos

The company will have little to no growth on youtube. Youtube will not be used to bring in new clients but instead a platform to store videos.

2. Use YouTube as an Extensive Marketing Channel green Marketing videos

The average channel takes about 22 months to go from 0-1000 followers. This is the average, however, and not everyone is looking to grow a company on Youtube. If you are consistent, use the right practices and post meaningful content, you can grow a channel fairly quickly. You can also increase faster if you collaborate with established YouTubers, and get featured on their channels. While growth is important, we are looking to build a community with loyal followers. Measuring success will come from the measure of interaction with the channel and the website. By creating a gravel cycling community on youtube, you will see a steady increase in clients using the routes and interacting with the website. On average 15 percent of youtube viewers click on website links, only 3 percent purchase the product or service. So for every 100 subscribers, you will have about 15 new website viewers, and about 3 new people using the routes.

3. Use YouTube as an experiential marketing platform yellow experiantels

Will experience some growth, and more interaction with the channel not but enough to make a major impact on the company. May experience some new website traffic.

4. Provide Content to Other Established Channels blue partnered videos

Has potential to bring in new traffic to the website if advertised properly on established channels.

Required Resources

1. Use YouTube as Platform for Linking Into Route Descriptions

No further costs required to continue using the channel for its current purpose.

2. Use YouTube as an Extensive Marketing Channel

To produce one video a week:

Video shooting- 15 hrs/week

Video editing- 5 hrs/week

Outsourcing a video editor- the price of hiring an editor strongly varies between \$10/hr to over \$300/hr. The easiest way to find an editor is through upwork.com where you can include your preferred price range. The more expensive means the more experienced. Some editors have the option to pay by video.

Total weekly cost with editor = 25 hours, \$400

Recommended video setup for shooting on your own:

[GoPro Hero 9](#)

[Wind muff for Hero 9](#)

[Chest mount](#)

[Tripod/selfie stick](#)

Total \$300

Recommended editing software for editing on your own:

iMovie- free with mac

Final cut pro - \$299

3. Use YouTube as an experiential marketing platform

Video shooting- 5-10 hrs/week

Video editing- 2-4 hrs/week

Hiring a part-time social media employee or intern to manage the channel, edit, and upload.

Cost \$25/hr

Total weekly cost = 10 hours, \$250

4. Provide Content to Other Established Channels

Video shooting- 5 hrs

Video editing- 5 hrs

Total cost for one video = 10 hours

Yearly

Recommendation

Option three is the best for Dirty Freehub right now. Before diving into option two, it is best to test different marketing strategies on Youtube. This will help gauge if you want to invest the time and resources needed for option two. If the channel is seeing some success, I suggest hiring a social media manager to run the channel and shoot/edit videos. This will give the videos and channel a professional, consistent style.

Like Syd and Macky said, in order to have real growth and impact on youtube, you need to build the company within the platform. It takes work to establish yourself but gravel cycling has the potential to be very successful on youtube because not many people are posting about it on the platform right now. With that said if you want to see company growth, option two should be the goal for Dirty Freehub.