

# YouTube Best Practices

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YouTube is one of the more popular social networks. We've put 10 of the most important best practices to help you optimize your YouTube videos.

If you have any questions, or require assistance, please contact us at [marketingsupport@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:marketingsupport@lakeheadu.ca).

## 1. Titles

- Titles are what people first read or see when scrolling through a list of videos
- Give a sense of what the video will be about in a few words, so make it clear and compelling
- Incorporate keywords, writing them in the way viewers would think when typing something in to search
- 20-70 characters long
- Consider posing the title as a question

## 2. Descriptions

- YouTube will only show the first two to three lines (about 100 characters) of your video's description
- Utilize important keywords or info within the first few sentences
- Include a brief summary of the video- the more detail the better, but try not to be too wordy
- Use relevant hashtags
- Include relevant links and/or account tags

## 3. Category

- YouTube will allow you to choose a video category under "Advanced Settings"
- Group your video with related content on YouTube by selecting the category that identifies your content the best

## 4. Tags

- Think about how someone would search for your video: what words or combination of words would they use?
- Include all relevant keywords

- It's best to fill all of the available characters
- Include easily misspelled words
- Include the year and the category/type of video

## 5. Thumbnails

- Main images viewers see when scrolling through a list of video results
- Should be bright, easy to see, with a clear picture or striking image that's on-brand with the video to grab someone's attention easily
- Each should be unique and should not look too similar to the others used on the channel as to avoid confusion to viewers (similar thumbnail themes are recommended for specific playlists to group videos visually)
- Should be in PNG format and less than 2MB
- Resolution is at least 1280x720
- Canva is a great tool for creating them
- No more than 20 characters typed on it
- Avoid text in the bottom right because that is where the YouTube watch time is on mobile

## 6. Cards

- Connect to other related videos, social channels and links referenced in the video
- Appear in a logical order, connected to what is occurring in the video at that point in time

## 7. Closed Captioning

- Not only do subtitles and closed captions help viewers, but they also help optimize your video for search by giving you another opportunity to highlight important keywords.
- Add subtitles or closed captions by uploading a supported text transcript or timed subtitles file
- Insert separate subtitles via a .SRT file or if you just have a transcript, you can get YouTube to auto-sync the captions to the video
- If audio is clear and simple, use auto-generator for CC which you can review and edit before publishing

## 8. End screens

- Up to four clickable frames that appear in the last 5-20 seconds.
- Give viewers at least one call to action, but can include all
  - Incorporate related videos

- Include a subscribe button (only if no branding watermark used throughout the video)
- Promote subscription to other social channels

## 9. Video length

- Decide how long your video should be
- One YouTube, videos under two minutes receive the highest level of engagement

## 10. Video Editing Tools

- There are many options for editing tools and software.
- Your computer may come with free editing software such as iMovie or Windows Movie Maker.
- These programs provide basic editing tools, like the ability to cut clips together, add titles, and add limited effects and color correction.