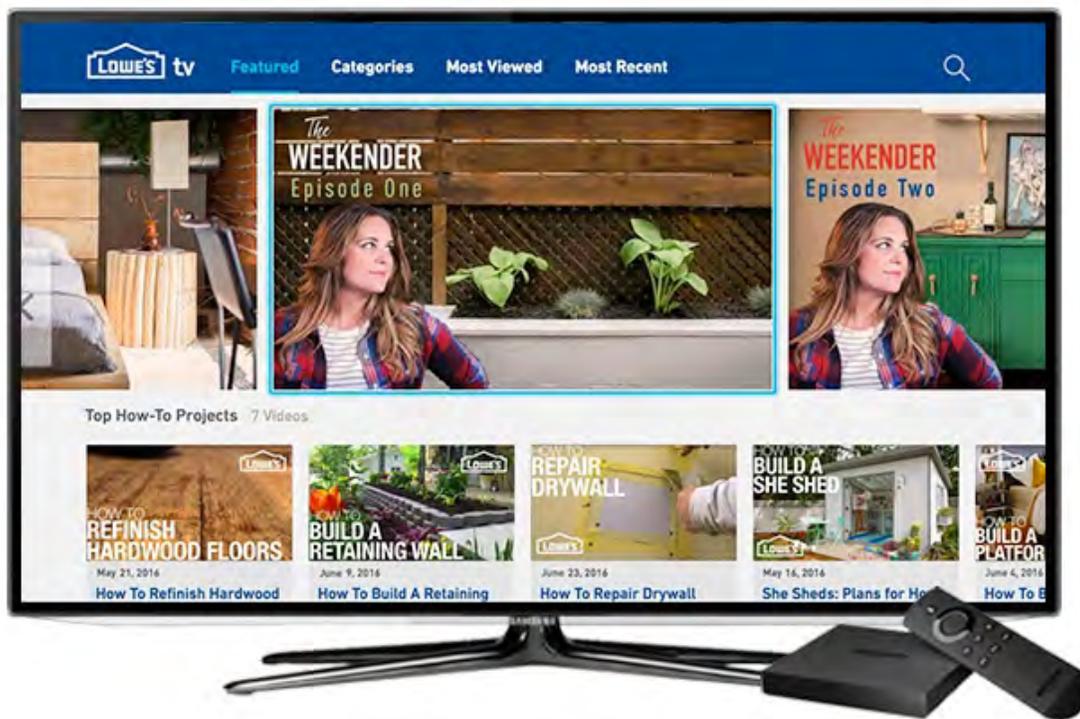


CASE STUDY

# Lowe's Engages Millennial Consumers with Original Episodic Content: Viewers Spent More than 12 Million Minutes with Lowe's Brand in the Inaugural Season



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*The Weekender, is an integral part of the retail giant's marketing strategy to engage millennial consumers using video storytelling delivered to streaming devices.*

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Lowe's has entered the world of episodic TV content with its new do-it-yourself (DIY) TV series, *The Weekender*. It's an integral part of the retail giant's marketing strategy to engage millennial consumers using video storytelling delivered to streaming devices. Lowe's launched its streaming app, Lowe's TV, in 2016 and just completed the first season of *The Weekender*; the inaugural season had more than 3 million views.

Lowe's wanted to get into storytelling and do it in a way that was authentic to the Lowe's brand. The company looked at opportunities to expand their video marketing programs to connect with the millennial market using relevant, episodic home improvement content that did not require a cable subscription.

The millennial market offers enormous opportunity and challenges for retailers. To begin with, millennials are cord-cutters. As they turn to video on demand (VOD) and streaming for their content, more and more Millennials are using ad blockers to tune out ads. For years, telling a brand story meant making an ad. But as many millennials literally don't see ads, content and episodic TV is one way Lowe's is trying to break through and tell their brand story. Streaming is one way they are reaching the emerging millennial market.

## **Telling the Brand Story with Content**

Authenticity is critical to the strategy and the new content. *The Weekender* is filmed on-site in real homes, featuring homeowners needing real makeover projects; and each project is completed in a single weekend. The series follows DIY expert Monica Mangin as she helps homeowners complete projects, including

bathroom makeovers, patio renovations, and kitchen upgrades. The projects are captured in a series of 10-minute videos and streamed on Apple TV, Amazon Fire TV and Roku.

Homeowners feature prominently in the series, working alongside Lowe's DIY expert to complete their renovation project. In fact, the stories are as much about the homeowners as the projects. The projects feature people who really deserve to have their space made over. For example, one of the homeowners was a woman in Philadelphia who had a dream of owning a home, but she had been told she couldn't because she was a single woman. She worked hard, saved up and bought her own home. *The Weekender* told her story while the Lowe's crew worked with her to make over her kitchen.

Each video episode also includes a call-to-action (CTA) for viewers who want step-by-step directions on how to complete the project, as well as purchase the products and materials used in the renovation. The videos performed extremely well; Lowe's had 3 million cumulative views, and more importantly, viewers spent more than 12 million minutes with the Lowe's brand.

Lowe's recognizes that millennials block advertising for a reason, and it walks a tightrope between wanting to increase sales, and needing to deliver authentic, relevant content. For Lowe's, it is important the audience doesn't think of the program as an ad disguised as content.

## **Streaming App Engages Viewers Directly with the Lowe's Brand**

A goal for the new video content and programming was to expand distribution beyond YouTube. With 250,000 subscribers, Lowe's YouTube channel is the most subscribed of any retailer. Focusing on the emerging millennial market, Lowe's wanted to tie its content directly to its brand.

On YouTube, Lowe's videos compete for attention with a wide range of content. But, content streamed through Lowe's TV is surrounded only by other Lowe's branded content. When viewers finish an episode of *The Weekender*, they're offered other Lowe's content to view. In order to view content other than Lowe's,

viewers must exit the Lowe's app. This makes the experience very sticky. Lowe's has found that streaming apps capture and keep the viewer on-site longer. The more time consumers spend with the Lowe's brand, the more likely they are to visit Lowe's for their home renovation needs.

Lowe's does not advertise on their streaming apps, so they know every time they get a download for Apple TV or Fire TV, viewers are watching their branded content, and seeing their messages, without ad blockers.

## **Moving Quickly to Engage New Customers**

Brightcove's open architecture is a key asset for Lowe's, enabling them to easily expand functionality by integrating with a wide range of third-party solutions, including analytics and CRM programs. For Lowe's, the possibilities are endless; Lowe's is using Brightcove to segment its content and targeting specific content to different channels. They can curate what they want and where they want it, publishing some content on YouTube and other content on streaming apps.

## **Open, Accessible Platform Promotes Innovation**

According to Lowe's, their expertise is in retail, not in producing TV shows. There was a big learning curve in figuring out how to produce the show, and how to cast for reality TV. The show was a collaborative effort by all of Lowe's marketing teams, calling on the expertise of Lowe's influencer and video marketing teams to develop new ways to conceive, produce, deliver and measure the effectiveness of episodic content. In order to film on-site, in people's homes, the marketing teams got creative on how they capture and produce video.

The show is all about putting the Lowe's brand in front of a new audience in fresh and different ways. Lowe's is using video to change the way they communicate about their brand.