Testimonial Videos: Marketing for a Digital World

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Introduction

J. Stanford “Stan” Staheli grew up in a small, rural town of southwest Utah. He had a hay field behind his parents’ house. One day when he was a child, his father went into town. He and his brother decided they were going to impress their father and haul the hay, which had been recently cut, into the hay barn. They worked through the morning and afternoon, and hauled the last of the hay just as their father was returning home. Upon seeing what his sons had done, Stan and his brother got a stern talking to from their father. It was that day that Stan learned the importance of moisture when working with hay.

While hay is now baled before it is hauled into a barn, unlike it was when Stan was a child; the principle is still the same. Without moisture, the hay leaves break off of their stems when they are baled. Leaves are the main source of nutrients in the hay. In other words, without leaves, dairy cows get no more benefit from hay than they would from eating weeds, or sticks. Natural dew has usually been the source of that necessary moisture. Because of the need for dew, hay farmers the world round, are limited. Although climates differ, all farmers must wait for the right conditions - some have to wait for enough moisture, and others must wait for the sun to come up and evaporate off some of the dew. These prime conditions usually last no more than a few hours, and yet because of the demands of crops, farmers have to bale hay much more often than prime conditions are available.

Stan Staheli taught his sons these same principles, and emphasized the importance of moisture on hay. One of his sons, Dave, grew up to be a hay farmer, and after years of having to deal with this moisture as a limiting factor, he was determined to find a better way to bale hay. Dave experimented with a few methods of getting moisture into hay, including spraying water onto the cut hay before it was baled. However, nothing he tried was successful. Inspiration came

in the most unusual of places - at a taco restaurant in Delta, Utah. Dave had stopped for lunch and saw the effect steam had on cold, stale tortillas. An idea was born. Later that summer, on a hot, dry afternoon he went out to the field and picked up some hay from the windrow. It was completely sun-dried, and therefore not nearly ready to be baled. He filled an old cardboard box with this crunchy hay and took it into his house. Unbeknownst to his wife, Dave fired up her pressure cooker, and ran a hose into his box full of hay. He anxiously awaited the pressure cooker to heat up, and then proceeded to fill the box with steam, and blow hay leaves all over the kitchen. The hay that was once overly dry and brittle was now in the perfect condition to be baled. His imagination took off.

This was before the days of Google and Wikipedia but Dave needed information. He signed up for a library card and read all the information he could find about boilers. A boiler manufacturer in Illinois let their imagination run wild as much as Dave's and they built him a custom, low-pressure boiler. Using an old trailer, a generator, and his new boiler, Dave began steaming hay on a large scale. The first few attempts were complete failures. He discovered that the steam got into the hay fibers quickly, but it also evaporated quickly. His idea to steam the hay with one tractor, and then bale with another right behind, did not work. His first few attempts received an audience, but Dave soon became embarrassed of his failures being made public. His next attempt, he decided, would have no audience. Dave and Brent, the owner of the farm, went out one day into a remote field. One of them drove the baler, the other shot steam onto the hay as it was fed into the baler. The bales came out nearly perfect, and the DewPoint was born.

The DewPoint 6110 is a 12-foot tall, 20-foot long, 30,000-pound mammoth of agricultural innovation. It consists of three main sections. First, the 5 million BTU diesel-fire burner that heats water from the 1,000 gallons of onboard tanks. The water is heated in the

second section, the boiler. Within the boiler, water is turned to steam and injected, via four manifolds, into the rows of hay as they are being baled. The final section of the machine is the diesel generator to power the electrical, computer, and sensor systems.

The DewPoint 6110 or “DewPoint” has been on the market since 2009, and since its introduction has been called a "game-changer," "revolutionary”, “magic” and even a "modern-day miracle." Interest in the machine has resulted in rapid and unexpected growth for Staheli West Inc. There are currently over 130 machines in use across the western United States, one machine in Australia, and interest in several countries in the Middle East, Eastern Europe and even South Africa.

While this could be viewed as a problem, Dave Staheli, President and Owner of Staheli West Inc., has instilled a culture of persistence and ingenuity into his employees, and therefore the rapid growth has been viewed as a blessing and challenge, not an obstacle. Dave's first employees were his sons. They helped him build the first machines out of the shop at the farm. He had the vision to see the potential of such a machine, and found a local accountant, Spencer, to help him run Staheli West like a business, not a farm. The next employee, Hans, was brought on to help develop the computer and electrical systems of the DewPoint. For two years, that was Staheli West. Dave would market and sell machines, as well as design and dream of updates for future versions. Hans’ job was to make those updates a reality. Spencer’s responsibility was to keep the books straight, keep the bills paid, and negotiate prices for the needed components. The Staheli boys turned the wrenches, and made sure the machines that were sold made it out of the shop on time.

Staheli West does not have the company culture of a high-end manufacturer. It was built by farmers, is run by farmers, and always focused on helping others farm more efficiently. This

culture has many benefits; customers can easily relate to the company, customer service is always very personal, and corporate “red tape” is virtually nonexistent. As the business grows, this culture does have its flaws. It is engrained in the company culture to learn, develop, and continuously improve; it has to be, because the company is compromised nearly entirely of amateurs who are learning as they go. Due to this fact, the advertising and marketing has always been very reactive.

For years Staheli West’s solitary method of advertising was advertisements and articles in magazines and agricultural journals. This only began because publishers contacted Dave and asked to write a story on the machine. Once that initial contact had been made, the publisher would then ask if Staheli West wanted to place an advertisement or editorial in subsequent issues. Articles never changed, and results were never monitored. New advertisements were never started, and old advertisements were never discontinued. Promotional products followed a similar pattern. They did not exist until Staheli West was approached by a company which wanted to make pens, hats and t-shirts to hand out at trade shows. While it was a good start to get such products manufactured, not much thought was given to them, and their purchase was not tied to any specific objective. These are just a few examples of how the marketing approach of Staheli West was based more on those who approached them, and not any specific internal strategy.

I was offered a position at Staheli West in the spring of 2012 and worked in the shop, assembling machines for roughly two months. Dave was then approached by a freelancing photographer/videographer that was looking for work. He pitched some ideas for marketing videos, and requested a salary that would have made him Staheli West’s highest paid employee. Dave knew that I had a limited background in videography and editing, and asked if that was

something in which I would be interested. Within the next months we purchased a computer, editing software, a camera, stabilization equipment and audio equipment. Once a few videos were shot and edited, I was challenged to update the company website and display the videos. YouTube naturally followed, and then came Staheli West's Facebook page. Some of the publications with which we advertised saw our new website, and contacted me wondering if I wanted to update our ads as well. This was the start of a new, and very basic marketing department at Staheli West Inc.

Starting in the winter of 2012, a marketing strategy was beginning to develop, all ads were updated, the website was updated at regular intervals, marketing efforts branched out to how-to videos, and leads and sales analytics were tracked via simple spreadsheet applications. While any of those things could be a candidate for a project such as this, I wanted to complete a project built around doing something new, rather than continuing what was already being done.

Individuals that call to get more information about the DewPoint 6110, ask many of the same questions. I have created a frequently asked questions (FAQ) section of the website, but received mixed responses when we would direct people to *read* more information. It was determined that videos might be a solution to this problem. Last year, several interviews were shot and edited as a rudimentary effort. Although areas on which to improve were obvious, and no research was completed beforehand, the videos have received positive response from customers, interested parties, and the community alike. The few videos we have produced are more watched and better understood by customers than our PowerPoint or PDF owner's manuals. The video section of our website also consistently receives more visits than the text-heavy portions of our website. Therefore, for this project I will conduct interviews with an even larger variety of DewPoint owners from more areas around the country, and produce testimonial-

style marketing videos to be displayed on our website, in our digital owners' manuals, and throughout social media.

Last year's interviews featured owners from a limited geographic area (Utah, Idaho and Nevada), and it seemed that all of them were early adopters of the machine. Barney (2010) supported this assumption when he discovered that individuals in rural areas are usually more critical of new technology than those in urban areas. That being said, Van der Veen (2010) and Gollakota & Doshi (2011) showed how technology can be a tremendous benefit to farming, as well as the fact that technology is quickly becoming a necessity for farms today. There are now tractors controlled soled by Global-Positioning-Systems that require an operator only to turn the tractor around at the end of the row. There are windrowers (machines that cut the crops and lay them in rows to be baled) that cut at up to 16 mph. When compared to the machines that cut at half that speed a decade ago, seeing the jump in technology is clear. Farm owners and operators alike can control their sprinkler systems, locate machinery, and even be alerted to changes in their crop moisture levels all via their smartphones. While farming was, and sometimes still is, viewed as a "simple" way of life, with recent advancements, the stereotype that farmers do not utilize technology is completed unfounded, and almost laughable. For example, Massey Fergusson has a windrower (a machine used to cut hay) that steers automatically via GPS, adjusts speed based on the yield (weight) of the crop it is cutting, and is run via touch screen monitor (see Appendix C). Or, the Gazeeka Moisture Monitor that determines the moisture of bales of hay using microwaves, gives instant feedback to the operator, and sprays the hay with paint in the exact spot where moisture goes outside the user-set threshold (see Appendix D). Farming and farmers are becoming more technologically advanced. Therefore, it is fitting to market this new DewPoint technology in a fairly technological way – online videos.

Over the past year, there has been an expansion of the demographics of those who own DewPoint 6110 machines. They are now on farms ranging from 400 – 8,000 acres. Owners are both male and female ranging from late 20's to late 70's in age. While the initial owners were early adopters, there are now several owners who admit to being adamant skeptics of the machine, which shows that more of the mainstream market, and even some late adopters, are gaining interest in the machine. Therefore, because of this expansion, and the fact that farmers are using more technology than ever before (Van der Veen, 2010; Gollakota & Doshi, 2011) this year there is the potential for a much wider array of interviewees.

These interviews constitute a professional project for three reasons. First, this is a main marketing strategy for a multi-million dollar company. Although it is a small, local business, the work that is being done is significant and crucial to Staheli West Inc. Staheli West currently focuses all of its marketing budget to attending trade shows, and sharing relevant information as quickly and broadly as possible. As the company continues to grow, there needs to be information available for the public, customers, and the agricultural community at large. Technology such as this has the potential to change the entire agriculture industry, and reengineer the entire mindset of farmers worldwide. In fact, the vision of Staheli West Inc. is "Changing Agriculture…Changing Lives." Stating a vision, and reaching that potential is only possible when those who need this technology can hear about it, read about it, or see it – they need information. These interviews contain that information, and can be shared more quickly, and less-expensively online than via trade shows. Therefore, under the current strategy and growth of Staheli West, online testimonial videos are crucial.

Second, creating such a project is not something that can be completed without a significant amount of time, effort, and application of communication principles. Due to the small

size of Staheli West, I am involved in every step of the production process. I have to use interpersonal communication skills as I schedule interviews, and travel to meet the owners. I then have to use interviewing skills as I conduct the interview. As I shoot the video, I must use advertising strategies and consider what type of setting will be most engaging to the viewers. After the interview has been shot, I must examine the footage from the viewer's perspective. I must also approach it with customers in mind as the content of the video has the potential to shape the image of our company, and I must determine what type of image of Staheli West Inc. I want to portray.

The third reason that this constitutes as a professional project is because a significant amount of research has and will continue to be completed. While trial and error might have eventually led to quality videos, the growth rate of Staheli West Inc. (sales have increased over 100% year-over-year for the past 4 years) is necessitating quality videos as soon as possible. Studies on interviewing, videos as marketing material, testimonials as a type of video, and marketing image and strategy will all be considered and applied to the production of these videos. The following research addresses these main topics: interviewing, trust and credibility in marketing (with a SWOT analysis and discussion of the "Elaboration Likelihood Model), presentation of information online, testimonials/endorsements (including Fisher's "Narrative Theory"). Focusing on these topics will lead to the production of focused, informative and credible customer testimonial videos to be used as part of Staheli West Inc.'s marketing strategy.

Literature Review

Interviewing

From a communication studies perspective, interviewing is a key component to many forms of qualitative research (Dilley, 2004). Interviews help researchers examine both social and

personal issues, (Dicicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006) put behavior into context, and help researchers understand events in which they did not participate (Dilley, 2004). It is more than just a set of skills. Interviewing has been called a “philosophy”, an “approach to learning” and “an interactive art, not a science” (Dilley, 2004; Dilley, 2000). Interviewing leads to qualitative information gathering, and can be done with a research or journalistic perspective (Bingham & Moore, 1959; Kahn & Cannell, 1961; Kvale, 1996; Dilley, 2004; DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Speaking of the journalistic perspective, Dilley (2000) encouraged future researchers to “be more like Barbara Walters” (p. 2). Dilley (2000) also laid out four areas of focus; background information, interview analysis, protocol creation and self-reflection. As this project is being produced for the interest of a third party, not the interviewer or interviewee, it is more closely related to journalism than qualitative research (Bingham & Moore, 1959). Therefore, these four steps will be implemented throughout the interviewing process.

Background Information. Background information on the interview subject is necessary for a smooth interview. Some information needs to be gathered prior to the interview in order to create valid and useful questions. Not only does collecting this information benefit the interviewer, but also when an interviewee notices that an interviewer is already aware of certain information or culture practices, the interviewee is more likely to be comfortable (Dilley, 2000). Obtaining a comfortable relationship with the interviewee is crucial, yet difficult because of the short time available to develop a relationship before the interview begins (Dicicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Kahn and Cannell (1961) determined that the level of relationship established needs to be proportional to the information desired. If minimal information is necessary, then an interviewer can succeed with establishing only a minimal relationship. However, the reverse also

applies. If personal or in-depth information is desired, a stronger relationship must first be established.

Understanding the location and setting of the interview is also important background information. Certain locations can trigger emotional responses from interviewees, and can influence issues such as comfort, disclosure and constraint (Csordas, et. al., 2010). Upon completion of some preliminary interviews, I learned that what I drove, what I wore and how I talked all affected the relationship I was attempting to build with the interviewees. Being forced to drive a Toyota Prius around New Mexico immediately lost credibility. Wearing a tucked-in collared shirt with anything other than cowboy boots was also unacceptable. Through trial and error, I personally learned how knowledge of background information, or lack thereof, can greatly affect the interviewer-interviewee relationship, and as discussed previously that relationship is necessary.

Interview Analysis. Due to the fact that interviewing is "not formulaic" (Dilley, 2004) one cannot ask the same questions, give the same responses and expect the same results. Therefore, since *the* right way to conduct an interview does not exist, one must learn through experience how to conduct an interview (Dilley, 2000). Kahn and Cannell (1961) supported this principle when they stated that studying the methods of interviewing does not make a competent interviewer, this is only obtained when an individual has "developed the skill necessary to put the principles into action" (p. 233). This project was preceded by several interviews over the past year. Therefore, some of the necessary skills, such as the ability to communicate non-verbally so as to not disrupt the audio recording with my own voice, or being able to turn any question into an open ended, non-leading question and, the most difficult, persuading shy farmers to carry on a

conversation in front of a camera, have been learned through experience, and the final product of this project will reach a higher standard.

Protocol creation. Questions are a crucial part of interviewing. Kahn and Cannell (1961) advised future researchers to form an objective before forming specific questions. Once an objective has been determined, all questions should lead to that objective. Relationship is a very important part of the interview process, and if questions are asked poorly, or questions are too probing, it can immediately provoke embarrassment and turn the interviewee hostile (Kahn & Cannell, 1961). Interviewers must also be cautious about leading interviewees to specific answers. Such action can lead to an awkward setting, as well as misleading answers (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). This fact was also strengthened through my personal experience. Some interviews contained more leading questions than the current set of questions. While those questions may have received the *verbal* answers I was looking for, the body language and tone of voice made the answers come across as insincere. For instance, I asked a couple farmers about the financial impact the DewPoint had had, or was having on their operation. I knew it had had an impact, and therefore asked the question in a very leading manner. Their responses were something like, “yes, it has had a positive impact financially.” Verbally, this was perfect. However, the response sounded scripted, because the question was asked in such a way that made any other answer seem unreasonable. The lack of natural, conversation-like answers did not fit into a testimonial-style video.

Interviewers need to be prepared, but also willing to make changes when needed. Dilley (2000) compares interviewers to actors in a communication act, and like any good actor, an interviewer needs to be able to improvise. While a basic script should exist, it must be understood that varying slightly from that script is an acceptable practice (Dilley, 2000). One

approach to interviewing is to lead with simple, closed-ended questions to establish a pattern of answering, and encouraging the interviewee to share. Once that pattern is established, then deeper questions can gradually be introduced (Dilley, 2000). However, the more in-depth questions need not always follow the script. DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree (2006) stated that 5-10 specific questions should be developed, but they are simply in place to delve into deeper questions and information. They conclude that an interviewer should be prepared to divert from the original plan, and to, in certain cases, allow divergence as such cases may lead to valuable and unexpected information (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Therefore, preparation is important but an interviewer must also be ready, and willing, to throw prepared information or questions out the window at any time.

Self-reflection. While questions are an obvious part of interviewing, listening to the answers is not always an area of focus. According to Dilley (2000) a good interviewer spends only 20% of the time talking, and 80% listening to the answers. Listening in an interview setting is more than just recording or remembering the facts. Good interviewers will also "listen" to an interviewee's non-verbal cues and act accordingly. In some cases, interviewers must match "the emotion" of the interviewee, and at other times they must oppose the interviewee in order to "bring forth the liveliest reaction" from the interviewee (Bingham & Moore, 1959, p. 178).

Self-reflection is more than just listening. It is also evaluating oneself upon completion of the interview. Dilley (2000) encourages interviewers to not only have self-evaluations, but also talk with other experienced interviewers regarding both positive and negative aspects of the interview. Dilley's (2000) ideas support the argument that interviewing is not a process that can be perfected simply by studying, but only by repetition, evaluation, and implementation.

Once these principles have been applied, interviewing can be a great way to discover and share information. As Kvale (1996) states, a good interview can actually become an “inter view” of a person, a group, or an idea. Discovering and organizing this “inter view” of customers and owners of the DewPoint 6110, will unquestionably become a great marketing resource for Staheli West Inc.

Trust and Credibility

Once an “inter view” has been created, there is a need to show that Staheli West Inc. is a trustworthy company, and that the information presented is credible. Jo (2005) stated that there are two factors that determine the credibility of a company in the eyes of the public; integrity and dependability. Integrity refers to the value that a company places on fairness and justice, while dependability refers to the consistency between a company’s promises and its actions. When potential customers seek information about a company or product, they seek both of these values (Jo, 2005). One method of determining how a company may be viewed, what expectations it is living up to, and where it may need to improve, is a S.W.O.T. analysis.

S.W.O.T. Analysis. S.W.O.T. is a tool used in a variety of industries to determine a company’s Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Briciu, Căpuşneanu, and Topor (2012) state that the SWOT analysis is “one of the most important management techniques used to understand the company’s strategic position” (p. 145). They describe this analysis as “a management tool for the collection and organization of reliable information, which enables decision-making managers to react actively and *ensures the success* of their business” (p. 145, emphasis added). In order to use this analysis in a way that will ensure success, it must be clearly understood. Hazelbaker (2006) laid forth a fairly clear definition of what S.W.O.T. analysis is, and how it works. He wrote, “The SWOT analysis relies on the assumption that a firm's internal

resources (strengths and weaknesses) and external situation (opportunities and threats) must match in order for it to develop an effective strategy" (p. 53). Strengths are the internal advantages that your company has over its competitors. Weaknesses are just the opposite - the internal factors your company lacks, which your competitors do not. Opportunities refer to favorable situations, either geographically, demographically, or otherwise, in which you have more of an advantage than your competitors. Threats are the opposite - situations where your competitors may be able to reach some of your market/customers/potential customers, better than you can (Hazelbaker, 2006).

As informality has always been a part of Staheli West culture, the first S.W.O.T. analysis was carried out in an informal way. Blank charts similar to Appendix B were distributed to several employees and the basics of S.W.O.T. were explained. A few employees had heard of S.W.O.T. analyses prior to this exercise, but none had officially participated in one, and therefore these results were honest and authentic, unencumbered by what employees thought they *should* write. This analysis was very helpful not only for the purpose of this project, but also for the growth of the company as a whole. Periodic assessment through a S.W.O.T. analysis in the future will continue to help Staheli West improve. S.W.O.T. analyses can also ensure that any company is up to date, and addressing the needs and wants of current customers. This act of keeping current will assist in customer relations, and add credibility to any company.

Another issue that can help and harm credibility is media convergence. Media convergence is changing the way people communicate, for better and worse. One thing that is easily lost as information becomes easier to create and share is credibility. Jun, Lee and Park (2009) examined the credibility of online information. However, they argued that too much neutral information, especially information regarding unlikely, but possible risks, could damage

the credibility of a company. Jo (2005) continues by mentioning that without credibility, “efforts to pitch information may be only self-serving displays or one-way communication” (p. 58). Therefore, purveyors of information must be careful when distributing information. There is a fine line between establishing credibility and being viewed as “self-serving” and issuing “one-way communication.” Jun, Lee, and Park (2009) discussed that this balance can be achieved, and even if initial attempts to gain trust of viewers have failed, or if credibility has been lost, it can be gained or re-gained. They state that past experience and interpersonal experiences can change beliefs and attitudes (2009). And since testimonials are defined as “a main character tells a story of his or her personal successful *experience* and directly or indirectly encourages the audience to follow her example” (Braverman, 2008, p. 666, emphasis added) it is clear that testimonial videos can function as both the “past experience” and the “interpersonal experience” that Jun, Lee, and Park (2009) advocate. Therefore, testimonial online videos can be a source of gaining credibility, and/or overcoming skepticism or other negative information.

Another key to a strong testimonial video is matching the expectations of the audience (Jo, 2005). While discussing the ways in which information can be shared, Jo (2005) states, “organizations tend to reveal only positive information” and “[they] often exploit unrealistic positive information to get more news coverage” (p.64). Measures must be taken to ensure that publics trust the information they view. If the information they receive does not meet their standard of trustworthiness, “they are more likely to seek objective sources of verification” (Jo, 2005, p. 64). Therefore, the content in this project must contain moderate levels of neutral or critical information. Having solely positive information can come across as unrealistic, and having too much will come across as too risky; both of which damage credibility.

Elaboration Likelihood Model. Even if a testimonial video is considered credible it is worthless, from an advertising perspective, unless it causes a reaction in the viewer. One desired reaction would be an attitude change. The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) (Sher & Lee, 2009; Haugtvedt, Petty & Cacioppo, 1992; Cialdini, Petty & Cacioppo, 1981) was brought forth with this situation in mind. It basically states that attitude change can occur via two main routes - the central route and the peripheral route. The separating factor between the two is the amount of thoughtful processing, or elaboration, carried out by the viewer. The central route refers to those who think more critically about the information presented to them. The peripheral route refers to those who pay closer attention to the more superficial aspects of an advertisement (Sher & Lee, 2009). While each individual will view each situation slightly different, ELM can help advertisers determine what type of argument they want to make, and how to present it based on the product they are selling or the demographic they are targeting.

Sher & Lee (2009) researched ELM in relation to online shopping and reviews that consumers post. They discovered that, especially in an online setting, socialization and past experiences influence which route an individual takes when evaluating marketing messages (2009). But contrary to ELM, “people with high skepticism shopping online did not take the central route in attitude change…” and “highly skeptical consumers tended to base their attitudes on intrinsic beliefs instead of extrinsic factors” (p. 142). Haugtvedt, Petty, and Cacioppo (1992) made a similar proposal. “The attitudes of high need for cognition subjects were more influenced by the cogency of the claims in an ad than were the attitudes of low need for cognition individuals” (p. 243). They later concluded, “high need for cognition individuals exposed to the strong argument version expressed more positive attitudes than high need for cognition individuals exposed to the weak argument version” (p. 247). Cialdini, Petty, and Cacioppo

(1981) also emphasized the importance of strong arguments, “when the arguments presented in a message are inconclusive, the recipients’ thoughts are guided more by their preexisting attitudes than by the content of the communication” (p. 363). Therefore, for this current project, the information shared and the quality of the arguments made by the interviewees may be more influential than the visual qualities of the videos.

Presentation

Marketing on the Internet is different than marketing offline. Novak and his colleagues called Internet marketing a “simulation of the real world...in which the online customer experience becomes paramount” (2000, p. 39). Website design, both features and layout, influence that customer experience. There is conflicting research as to what type of layout is more effective. Novak, Hoffman & Yung (2000) state that consumers want some challenge, enough to arouse them, but not so much as to frustrate them. Falk, Sockel, & Chen (2005) argued the opposite. They found that great care should be taken when designing the layout of information, and that desired information should be able to be found quickly. They concluded that when people cannot easily find what they want, they give up or look elsewhere. In terms of Internet videos, this is important to remember because as of 2010, YouTube was the third most-visited website worldwide (Bromberg, Augustson, & Backinger, 2012). Bondad-Brown and her colleagues had similar findings, and discovered that by 2010, 71% of Internet users watched or downloaded online videos (Bondad-Brown, Rice, & Pearce, 2012). The same research group also found that the ease of sharing, and recommending videos had a positive correlation with online views (Bondad-Brown, Rice, & Pearce, 2012). Therefore, finding videos regarding specific information is becoming a common practice, and how videos are displayed can play a role in who views them, and how they are viewed.

Taking viewer's feelings and opinions into consideration is also important to user experience. Huang, Chen and Wang (2012) discussed empathy as a main factor in the viewing and sharing of online videos. Information that matches the viewers' attitude or self-concept is more likely to relate to the viewer (Huang, Chen, & Wang, 2012). Interactivity of videos, and personalized content are also factors that contribute to the viewing of online videos (Verleur, Heuvelman, & Verhagen, 2011). This allows viewers to find videos that fit their needs and mood. For this project the tone and attitude of the videos should vary, and they should be organized in a way that is intriguing and interactive but not difficult to navigate.

Short videos maximize the viewers' ability to concentrate (Verleur, Heuvelman, & Verhagen, 2011). It has also been found that footage with a "non-professional" authentic feel; helps generate views (Bondad-Brown, Rice, & Pearce, 2012). The framing of shots, specifically in interviewing situations, has been found to have mixed results. A close-up can come across as threatening or intimate depending upon the context in which it is used (Verleur, Heuvelman, & Verhagen, 2011). In the same study, it was also concluded that the angles from which subjects are shot can influence viewers' perspectives. Subjects shot from low angles are viewed as more dominant or intense while those shot from high angles come across as more sociable (Verleur, Heuvelman, & Verhagen, 2011). McCain, Chilberg, & Wakshlag (1977) argued that video needs to be shot from multiple angles rather than just a single perspective. Because the conclusions in research vary so widely, interviews for the current project were shot from multiple angles. This allowed for more options in the editing process. As some interviewees were more personable, and appeared happy, using close-ups did not come across as intimidating as Verleur, Heuvelman and Verhagen (2011) suggested. However, others were more serious and reserved, so close-ups and low angles were avoided.

Not only are ease of use, framing and length of video, and tone important, but also understanding the consumer's needs, expectations, wants and experience, and factoring that into a design. Falk, Sockel & Chen (2005) considered those factors to be part of the "quality" with which designers need to be concerned. Yates & Noyes (2007) also studied the effects of website design on consumer preference. They state that not only has the Internet changed our social and professional lives, but also it has changed our consumer attitudes (2007). According to the authors, "interactions need to be individually tailored and information-oriented, relying less on appeals to status and more on objective information that individuals can process usefully" (p. 1342). Attractiveness of a web page and interactivity of its content also play a role in consumers' attitudes towards information (Yates & Noyes, 2007). Novak and his colleagues (2000) supported that argument by stating "online environments offering full information improve the decision making process for consumers and offer greater benefits to online retailers than environments with less information" (p. 40). Therefore, as mentioned above, both positive information, and neutral or critical information must be present. Failing to do so, could hinder the decision making process of consumers. In the case of this particular project, interviewees will be asked to share criticisms of the DewPoint 6110 and/or Staheli West in general. While it may not all be included in the videos, some of it can be, and even those criticisms that are not shared publicly can help Staheli West Inc. improve.

As websites become more information-oriented rather than image-oriented, like previous forms of advertising, advertisements might lose some of their visual appeal. In order to overcome this issue, Yates & Noyes (2007) advocated for more interactivity, attractiveness and variety. Falk and his colleagues (2005) acknowledged the use of interactivity and other "interface features" and argued that those features can be more important than the content itself. Online

videos can fulfill multiple roles. They can be interactive, attractive and individualized, and therefore are a great tool for displaying and sharing information online.

Testimonials

Braverman (2008) discusses the difference between testimonials and persuasive information. While she worked specifically in the health information field, some of her findings can be universalized. She defines a testimonial as "a main character tells a story of his or her personal successful experience and directly or indirectly encourages the audience to follow her example" (p. 666). Braverman (2008) also addresses persuasion and varying approaches to persuasion. Regarding the persuasive power of testimonials, she stated that recorded messages were more persuasive than written messages (2008). Upon completion of her study, Braverman concluded that testimonials are persuasive because they appeal to emotions instead of just rational thinking. Due to this fact, "the main character of a testimonial story is easy to identify with even if she or he is not the most reliable source of information" (2008, p. 674-675). Wang (2005) echoes that message as he states that third-party testimonials can be persuasive because the status of uninvolved third party adds credibility to one's statements. This credibility can be a factor for potential customers, as Wang (2005) discovered that 64.9% of those exposed to a third-party endorsement show willingness to buy. He also illustrates that when a risk, or potential risk is found, consumers will often consult others and value their opinions (2005). Therefore testimonials are not only persuasive, they can help overcome the problem of perceived risks.

Research has also shown that short videos are viewed as more interactive, and short videos maximize the viewers' ability to remember the content (Veleur, Heuvelman, & Verhagen, 2011). Braverman (2005) concluded that testimonial messages were better received by those who did not have specific questions and were "low-involved participants" – or those who were

watching for means other than finding specific information. This strengthens the argument for quick, attention grabbing testimonials, rather than longer videos that address specific questions or problems.

Verleur and colleagues (2011) discovered that viewers become more emotionally open to content that reinforces social interaction with others. Once viewers are emotionally open, they are more likely to change attitudes and moods. (Veleur, Heuvelman & Verhagen, 2011). Other researchers have also found that interactive information, especially online, is more memorable than information that is less interactive (Yates & Noyes, 2007; Falk, Sockel, & Chen, 2005). Wang (2005) agreed, and stated that testimonials may be more persuasive than public relations messages because of the different sources from which the public relations information is coming.

The Narrative Paradigm

What is it that makes testimonials more believable than public relations or advertising messages? One possible explanation is the power of storytelling, or the power of the narrative paradigm. Fisher (1985) states that the narrative paradigm's "primary function is to offer a way of interpreting and assessing human communication that leads to critique, a determination of whether or not a given instance of discourse provides a reliable, trustworthy, and desirable guide to thought and action in the world." (p. 351). He continues by quoting another scholar and states that communication is more than "a mere action, a purposeful activity…it is a living process in which a community of life is lived out" (p. 354). Approaching communication understanding that it is dynamic, and always entails more than a single act, can improve communication effectiveness. According to the narrative paradigm, communication can also "mystify an audience" more effectively if a coherent story is told, and the information shared aligns with the "stories" that the listener already holds to be true (Fisher, 1985). This is relevant

to the current study as testimonials tell stories. If the narratives in the testimonials do not align with the viewers' realities, they will be discredited. The opposite is also true, if the viewers can relate to the narratives being told, they are more likely to consider the information credible.

Wang & Calder (2006) examined the narrative paradigm and applied it specifically to advertising. They discuss the "transportation experience" which is the extent to which a viewer becomes mentally and emotionally involved in a narrative. They found that if an advertisement does not interrupt the transportation experience, a viewer has a positive feeling about that advertisement (2006). For example, if an individual is reading a story in a magazine about how eating healthy changed a person's life, they are more likely to have a positive feeling toward an ad for health food. Such an ad goes along with the transportation experience that the viewer is feeling. However, if in the middle of that story was an ad for getting car tires rotated and oil changed, the viewer will develop a negative attitude towards that ad because it contradicts the experience they are having. This concept strengthens the argument for using testimonial videos as a marketing tool. Testimonials create a narrative that can get viewers to have a "transportation experience," as well as serve as an advertisement. Marketing this way ensures that advertisements do not distract from the narrative because the narrative is the advertisement.

Rationale

Upon completion of this research, it was clear that steps must be taken to improve the marketing approach of Staheli West. An in-depth look at a S.W.O.T. analysis (see Appendix B) revealed that online, testimonial videos could play a key role in that improvement. In order to be effective, the principles above have been implemented as follows.

The interview process began long before the meeting with the interviewees as background information, or lack thereof, can greatly influence the outcome of an interview

(Dilley, 2000). Kahn and Cannell's (1961) advice to study and repeatedly apply principles was also followed. While I conducted some interviews and had a basic script, (see Appendix A for full list of interview questions) I had to be willing to stray from it if it appeared that doing so would have fostered more communication, or if straying from it helped the interviewee feel more comfortable, leading to more relaxed and natural responses.

Not only was I conscious of the interviewing process and content, the videos were shot and edited in a way that portrayed Staheli West as a credible organization. For example, camera stabilization was always a focus, and special attention was given to audio quality of the interviews. Also, corporate colors and logos were also included as an added attempt at professionalism. As Jo (2005) advocated, I strived to match viewers' expectations with video content, meaning that I made a conscious effort to avoid filling the videos with strictly overly positive information, or take things out of context. A balance was sought, because as Jun, Lee and Park (2009) concluded, too much neutral information can also be detrimental. I approached each interview with at least two camera angles, but none from a low angle as an intense or dominating appearance might distract from the desired effect of the videos (McCain, Chilberg, & Wakshalg, 1977; Verleur, Heuvelman, & Verhagen, 2011).

After the shooting and editing process I presented the videos. While research offers several differing viewpoints, (Novak, Hoffan, & Yung, 2000; Falk, Sockel, & Chen, 2005; Huang, Chen, & Wang, 2012; Verleur, Heuvelman, & Verhagen, 2011) I want videos to achieve maximum views; therefore I posted them on YouTube because of its volume and daily traffic (Bromberg, Augustson & Backinger, 2012). I also considered the viewers' attitudes and beliefs, as that will add to view-ability and credibility of videos (Huang, Chen, & Wang, 2012). For this project, a finite number of videos were completed, but the captured footage will continue to be

used in future marketing efforts. Similar to the S.W.O.T. analyses completed for this project (See Appendix B), future analyses can be done and this footage will be reused in and repurposed to fit needs at any given time.

Method

With an understanding of the importance of interviewing, credibility, presentation of online information and testimonials, I carried out my project in the following manner. Staheli West was already in possession of the hardware and software necessary to shoot, produce and edit such videos as they were and still are committed to getting these videos produced. In order to get maximum efficiency out of each visit, visits were planned during a time in which customers were actually using the machine. This allowed me to not only conduct an interview, but to also get footage of them using the machine. Due to the limited hay-growing season, previous approval from the capstone committee was received and some footage has been recorded prior to conducting extensive research in the area. To overcome any shortcomings, and ensure that the interviews could be edited in a way congruent with research, I conducted interviews using a variety of questions (see Appendix A for full list of interview questions) and fostered conversation that lead to the gathering of a variety of footage.

Once all of the footage was collected, and interview segments were edited, they were separated by context of the interviews (location, size of farm, etc.) rather than just content. This is based on Yates & Noyes (2007) evaluation that consumers preferred context-based to content-based websites. A total of 15 videos were produced. Some are an edited version of a single interview and represent one farmer and his experience. Based on the results from the S.W.O.T. analysis, other videos are broken into themes, based on the question that such a clip would answer. This was designed to help strengthen the service and support network. Others were

edited into a “teaser” or “advertisement” designed simply to create interest in the product, and help potential customers overcome some of their apprehension (another weakness discovered though the S.W.O.T. analysis). This variety of videos is strategically being released via Staheli West’s website, YouTube channel, and Facebook page. While all of the videos are available on YouTube, the videos share on the website and Facebook page will be released/shared more slowly in order to continually generate views. The sales force as deemed necessary is distributing all the videos.

It is understood that with more equipment, time, and money, more professional quality videos could have been produced. However, for the current project, a more “non-professional” (Bondad-Brown, Rice, & Pearce, 2012) feel was desired. This is not to say that a lack of quality can be justified, but rather that environmental factors can increase the credibility and ability to relate to certain aspects of a video. Research and personal experience have led to the same conclusion. For example, audio equipment that picks up a small amount of wind noise can make an interview more powerful as an interviewee discusses the benefit of using the DewPoint in windy conditions. Flies buzzing around the interviewee add a sense of *realness* to the footage. These measures were calculated methods to add credibility and relate to the target demographic. While many of the chosen methods were based on research, others came from experience.

Educational Reflection

This project, while focused on interviews and videos, is actually a culmination of skills I have learned throughout the past several years as a student of Communication. Many skills were learned in my years as an undergraduate, but the coursework that is part of the Masters of Professional Communication (MAPC) program helped me focus and apply those skills, while also helping me learn others.

An ethics course helped me view the interviews from the interviewees' perspectives, and helped me make decisions on which footage should or should not be used. Presentation courses helped me understand the importance of appearance – both while conducting the interview, and visuals that are included in the videos. Interpersonal courses helped me improve my interviewing skills, as well as provided strategies on how to help the interviewees feel more comfortable during the interview. Research methods and theory courses gave me a foundation on which to build. They helped me understand the importance of proper research, and the power of a well-written paper.

While interviewing and video editing may only be a small part of my life and future career, the lessons and skills I have learned while earning this degree and carrying out this project have truly improved my life. This degree is not a research degree, or a writing degree, it is a degree in *professional* communication, and it has prepared me to do just that – take these skills and become professional in my field of choice.

Conclusion

The successful completion of this project was beneficial for all parties involved. Potential customers now have an easily accessible, organized, and entertaining wealth of information to view while making the decision to buy the nearly $200,000 DewPoint 6110. Interviewees will, hopefully, continue to feel a sense of accomplishment as they see their opinions and information valued by Staheli West Inc. Staheli West Inc. has benefited because they have marketing information that they can use for years to come. While it is difficult to directly relate sales to these videos, Staheli West is having sales that more than double the sales of last year, and feedback on these videos has been more prominent and positive than any other marketing tactic currently being used by Staheli West Inc. Lastly, I benefited not only because of the degree that I

will earn upon completion of this project, but because of the valuable skills I honed, the information I learned from research, and the relationships I formed with customers around the country.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

1. Tell us about your operation - acres, tons, cuttings, climate, etc.
2. How did you hear about the DewPoint 6110?
3. What peaked your interest and made you look into getting one?
4. What made you pull the trigger, and buy it?
5. Has it changed your hay? If so, how?
6. What has it done, if anything, in terms of management, for your operation?
7. Has it changed any financial aspects of your operation? If so, how?
8. Has it changed your mindset towards harvesting your crop? If so, how?
9. The machine has been said to "change the game". Would you agree? Why or why not?
10. Has your lifestyle/stress levels/free time been influenced because of it? If so, how?
11. What words of advice or words of warning would you give to a prospective buyer?
12. How was working with Staheli West, both during the buying process and now with technical support and customer service?

Appendix B

S.W.O.T. Analysis

Strengths

- One of a kind product – no competition
- Niche product for niche market
- Ran by farmers that make a machine, not manufacturers that make a farming machine
- Can work with any existing tractor and big-baler system.
- Sales process – "Operation Assessment"

Weaknesses

- Service/support network
- Internal structure/organization
- Lack of in-house financing
- Customers are skeptical of new technology

Opportunities

- Overseas expansion
- Apply technology to smaller balers
- Market to dairies/end user, not just grower
- Work with regional dealers for sales and support

Threats

- Expiring patents
- Other steamers entering the market
- Crop treatment/chemical that accomplishes similar results
- Weak reputation if we can't keep up with service and support needs

Appendix C

Massey-Fergusson Windrower

Innovative software that works harder, so you don't have to.

The software incorporated in our WR Series design is the latest, greatest technology available to take care of a multitude of windrower functions that you'd otherwise have to handle yourself, such as automatic header speed, cooling system, steering system and System 150™.

For example, the automatic header speed control allows the header to communicate directly with the windrower header drive pumps and the engine rpm. Other systems like the V-Cool System are controlled by the same software for optimum efficiency.

Mow all day – or even two – without refueling. Another great feature of the WR Series is the convenience of having the highest capacity fuel tank in the business – 492 litres. No other windrower holds more. Couple that with our fuel-saving technology, and you can go for up to two full days in lucerne.

Automatic header speed control.

Obviously, as goes the header, so goes productivity. And thanks to our windrower software improvements and electronic displacement pump controls, the response time of the automatic header speed control has been reduced, making you more productive than ever. It actually operates and adjusts the header speed independently of the engine speed. The benefits are obvious:

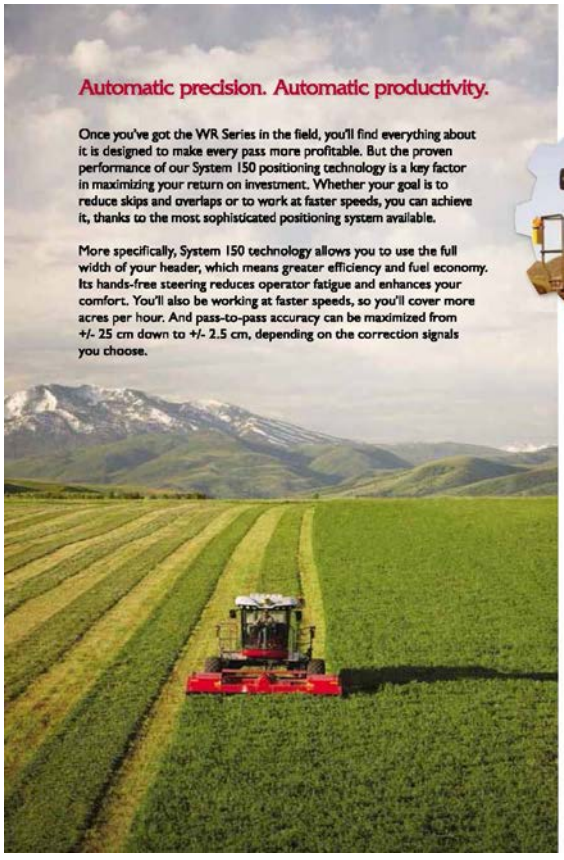
- Head speed remains constant when engine speed decreases
- Consistent cut and conditioning
- Solid performance even on hills and when mowing thicker patches of crop

Lightweight and portable, System 150 can even be moved from vehicle to vehicle. And you can transfer field information using a standard USB thumb drive.

- **Straight line driving**
- **Reduced operator fatigue**
- **Center pivot circles**
- Contours

Real time fuel data for real fuel efficiencies.

GPS isn't the only tactic to increase your fuel efficiency. Another great way is by measuring fuel usage against the amount of work done – not just against the time you've spent doing it. And the FieldMax monitor digital fuel economy meter on these WR Series windrowers does just that. By monitoring acres per gallon and your operating speed, you can make adjustments to maximize your fuel use. For example, in certain situations, a field speed of 26 kph might not be as fuel efficient as 20 kph. When fuel prices are high, you can drive to maximize fuel economy. When fuel prices are low, you can drive to maximize productivity.



Automatic precision. Automatic productivity.

Once you've got the WR Series in the field, you'll find everything about it is designed to make every pass more profitable. But the proven performance of our System 150 positioning technology is a key factor in maximizing your return on investment. Whether your goal is to reduce skips and overlaps or to work at faster speeds, you can achieve it, thanks to the most sophisticated positioning system available.

More specifically, System 150 technology allows you to use the full width of your header, which means greater efficiency and fuel economy. Its hands-free steering reduces operator fatigue and enhances your comfort. You'll also be working at faster speeds, so you'll cover more acres per hour. And pass-to-pass accuracy can be maximized from +/- 25 cm down to +/- 2.5 cm, depending on the correction signals you choose.

The world's most advanced hands-free* steering. Hands down.

It only makes sense that the next generation of windrower would make the most of the next generation of hands-free steering technology. And the WR Series does – with System 150 Precision AutoSteering.

Field speeds of up to 26 kph – with extreme accuracy, especially for a windrower. The aggressive line acquisition and on-line performance of System 150 is second to none. And easy-to-use features like boundary and area cut mapping allow you more control over everything from planning your swath patterns to identifying areas of overlap.

Just Plug & Play – because all WR Series windrowers are pre-wired to accept System 150 AutoSteering. And System 150 communicates directly with our electro-hydraulic steering, so it eliminates the need for additional steering hardware. The response time is drastically reduced for a much higher degree of steering accuracy.

Easy to operate – when System 150 is "on", the GPS signal replaces the signal from the steering wheel. If the steering wheel is moved by hand, the windrower automatically goes back to manual steering.**

Stable 34 kph road transport.

Thanks to the increased precision and accuracy of our electro-hydraulic steering and Electronic Displacement Control, our 34 kph travel speed offers better control, quicker response and more stability.

*Please refer to the operator's manual for proper operation of System 150 Precision AutoSteering System with the WR Series Windrowers.

**Operators can easily engage the System 150 AutoSteering by pressing a button on the back of the FNR handle.

Appendix D

Gazeeka Moisture Gauge

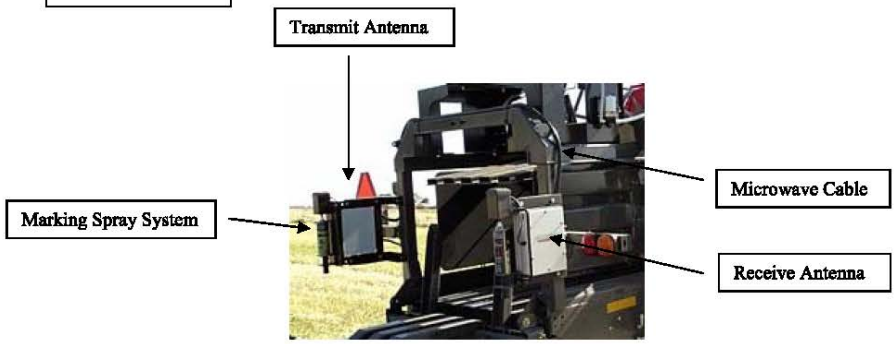
1. Introduction

1.1 System Components

The Gazeeka Model 870S moisture monitor consist of the following components:

- *Transmit Antenna* - An active transmitting antenna containing microwave electronics to (1) generate and transmit the beam of microwave energy into the bale, and (2) receive and analyse the signal retuned from the receive antenna.
- *Receive Antenna* - A passive receiving antenna on the opposite side of the bale (ie. opposite the transmit antenna) which collects the microwave energy which has not been absorbed by the bale. The microwave antennae have been designed to optimise the moisture measurements in the baled fodder.
- *Microwave Cable* - A microwave cable (run inside a flexible steel conduit) which carries the collected microwave signal from the receiving antenna back to the electronics in the transmitting antenna for comparison with the originally transmitted signal. **The microwave cable between the two antennae is an important part of the overall system and must be installed and maintained properly if optimal performance is to be achieved. There is more on this subject in the Installation and Maintenance chapters.**
- *Terminal (LCD Display/Keypad)* – A liquid crystal display (LCD) unit with a keypad mounted in the driver's cabin to enable control and measurement feedback.
- *Antenna Support Frames* – Used to mount the antennas onto the rear of the baler.
- *Baler Cable (Interface Cable)* - A cable to connect the transmit antenna to the Terminal in the tractor cabin. The power for the transmit antenna comes directly from the tractor via this cable.
- *Marking Spray System* – A paint spray marking system that is capable of automatically marking bales for easy identification at the pickup stage.

Terminal in tractor



1.2 *How it Works*

The Gazeeka Model 870S instrument uses microwave techniques to measure the moisture content of the hay in the bale as it emerges from the baler.

Gazeeka instruments use techniques that are based on sound scientific principles, which have been proven in the laboratory and verified in the field.

The instrument measures the speed of the microwaves and the amount of microwave energy absorbed through the bale of hay. The speed of microwaves through air is very close to the speed of light through space, and the speed of microwaves through dry hay is a little slower than through air. However, the speed of microwaves in water is considerably slower than that in dry hay. The difference in this speed is attributed to a value known as the dielectric constant (or sometimes called relative permittivity).

The dielectric constant for air is close to 1, for dry fibrous material it is closer to 2 while for pure water it is approximately 80. Similarly, the amount of microwave energy absorbed in air is less than dry hay and in dry hay is much less than in water. Thus if measured correctly, these measurements can be a very sensitive method of measuring moisture in the bale of hay.

The calibration of the Gazeeka moisture monitor was carried out without removing variable factors such as hay temperature, bale density and the way the bale was pressed to try and ensure that typical variations in these types of variables are within the precision parameters required in a reliable, real time, on-line hay moisture measurement system.

Microwaves can "bounce" off stationary or moving metal objects and interfere with measurements, so the Gazeeka Model 870S System uses both hardware and software techniques to minimise the effect that these sources of "noise" may have on the operation of the instrument. Further information on how to obtain the best performance from the Gazeeka Model 870S moisture monitor can be found in the installation section.

All of the microwave signals are generated using crystal locked frequency synthesisers. This means that there is no maintenance requirement to check operating frequencies for optimum moisture measurement performance.

As a bale moves into the microwave beam, the system detects the change in microwave signal and determines a bale is present. The system then looks for small changes in the microwave signal to indicate that the bale is moving within a reasonable time allowance for a plunger stroke (if not it determines the bale has stopped). Then once the system determines that the bale is far enough past the microwave beam so that it can reasonably be expected that the entire detected microwave signal has traveled through the bale (and not some of the signal around the end of the bale) it starts to convert the microwave readings to a moisture content.

In simple terms there are only three things that are critical to obtain a good moisture measurement, (assuming the microwaves are being measured correctly). These are a good air path reading, the bale width set properly, and the correct equation for the type of hay being baled is selected. The fist two items are close to "set and forget" once these are set they should not change from year to year unless the baler is changed or parts of the microwave system are replaced or moved.

To ensure that your Gazeeka Model 870S instrument remains compliant in terms of electromagnetic emissions and electromagnetic susceptibility, the instructions and procedures in this manual are recommended to be followed.

Appendix E

Example Video Links

2013 Compilation:	http://youtu.be/joqps74cLbw
Changing Lives:	http://youtu.be/_RsxeAykI-I
Owner's Interviews:	http://youtu.be/UPiIl_RWkDE
	http://youtu.be/YwsY4pqItRY